

O F
CHRISTIAN
PRUDENCE,
O R
RELIGIOUS
WISDOM;

Not Degenerating into
IRRELIGIOUS CRAFTINESS,
I N
Trying Times.

L O N D O N,

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TO
CHRISTIAN
PRUDENCE

OF
RELIGIOUS
WISDOM

Not Degenerating into

CRUELTY

LONDON

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GODLY WISDOM;

O R,

Religious Prudence,

**Not Degenerating into irreligious
Craftiness, in Trying Times.**

Mankind were formed, and placed by God in this World, but design'd for another. And the condition and employment of our Life here, is to be a passage through this World, in pursuit of, and preparation for a better. And whilst we are duly careful for the next, and omit nothing that is to bring us to the end of our Stage; we may wisely provide for this too, and contrive for our quietness and convenience by the way.

The way to the other World, of true and perfect Joys, are all the Duties and Directions of Religion: which are those paths the Wisdom of God sees necessary to perfect and spiritualize our Natures, and which the Goodness of God has prescribed to lead us to himself, and to the Re-

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gions

Of Godly Wisdom.

gions of eternal Life. Whatsoever God in his holy Gospel, calls us to profess, or practise ; that is the way to the World above. And if we hope to arrive safe there, and attain the Glory and Blessedness thereof ; whatever hardships occur, or accidents befall us therein, we must never go out of the way. When, upon any consideration, we turn out thence, all our steps are wrong ; and will never be right, till we return into it again.

The way to make the most of this World, and secure to our selves the greatest ease, advantage, and injoyment in our passage ; are the *Rules of humane Prudence and worldly Wisdom*. And, as we are call'd upon, to hold on constantly in the former, by the more still voice of Conscience, and the Laws of God : So are we reminded, to make use of these later, as occasion serves, by the more importunate urgings of our sensual Nature and Necessities, and the more loud voice of Flesh and Blood.

Now, as our fleshy Nature and Necessities require : so doth Religion allow us to serve our selves of these Rules of Humane Prudence, so long as we keep within a due compass. That is, whilst we betake our selves only to such ways of external quiet and injoyment in this World, as go not out of any way of Religion, or path of Happiness, leading to another World. Whilst the Rule of Wisdom, is only such, as affords ease, or comfort in our passage ; but doth not carry us out of our way, or stop our progress. When he sent out his Disciples, as sheep in the midst of wolves, he wise, says our Lord to them,

as serpents, so long as they took care first to keep as innocent, or simple and plain-carriaged, as doves, Mat. 10. 16.

But fleshy Nature, is glad of any way that affords ease here, however it hinders, or misleads us, from the paths of those greater Joys, which we should all seek to secure, and prepare for hereafter. It runs to them, and that with greediness: So that, when any Duty of Religion gainsays it, and calls another way; there is a tryal of our Love and Affection for the two Worlds. When any way of Righteousness, for instance, becomes burden'd with the Cross, and a way of worldly and unrighteous Wisdom can avoid it, or, it may be, lead to be, not only safe and ease here, but seemingly happy and prosperous: then doth God make a tryal, whether Religion, or Flesh and Blood, have most Force; whether this, or the next World, are of greatest weight with us. Worldly Reproaches and Persecutions upon a Duty, are the true Test of its worthy and faithful Voraries, and discover who they are that set it above this World. And God is careful in the course of Providence, still to annex worldly sufferings to some Duties of Religion or other, to separate the impure dross from the pure Gold; the light chaff that a storm of Persecution can drive away from the solid Wheat; and, as a Touch-stone, to make manifest, who are those truly worthy and sincere minds, that will love and steadily practise any Duty, when left to it self, and stript of all external Bait of worldly inducement. *There must be Heresies, saith St. Paul, which, as they increase,*

Of Godly Wisdom.

grow still into Factions and Persecutions against the Orthodox, that they who are approved, may be made manifest, 1 Cor. 11. 19.

To be ready to approve our selves to him in such Tryals, it highly concerns us all, to understand clearly what are the ways of fleshly Wisdom, that, at such times, we may take more care to keep back from them. There is the more need to be clear in this before-hand, because the time of determining, and practising, is not the fittest for deliberating upon it. For Flesh and Blood, starts first, and calls loudest on such occasions. It presents variety of these ways to our minds. And tho' the ways are wrong, yet through the bias of fleshly inclinations, our minds are leaning, and very willing to believe them right. The generality of Mankind are prone to see, and assent on that side, which appears most safe, and consistent with this present World. They are apt to bid a hearty welcome, and listen to any one that speaks for that way, and are easily convinced by him, being willing to be Deceived; and 'tis well, if not a curse to Deceive themselves into such a persuasion. And when Flesh and Blood are like to be so busy and powerful on such occasions, to recommend such ways of worldly Prudence; it is very necessary our Minds and Consciences should not be without their Armour, but have clear convictions of their folly and unlawfulness, to oppose against them.

To afford some Help in this Point, to such sincere Tempers, as would be thankful to be shew'd a saving Truth, and glad to approve themselves

Chap. I. Of the Ends of Christian Prudence.

themselves to God on such occasions: I shall offer something, tho' imperfect, to set off the way of true Wildom, and to shew what are the limitations of Religious Prudence, and what the contrary liberties of fleshly Wildom, or worldly Craftiness. That so, they may not err for want of information, when, in course of Providence, they are brought on such Tryals.

CHAP. I

Of the Nature of Christian Prudence, and how seen in choosing Right Ends.

Wildom, or Prudence at large, is being wise for our selves; or seeing, and following, what Reason sets off as best for us. It is Reason contemplating, not the mere Truth of things, which is Science: but their Goodness and Desirableness, or what are best for us to seek, or practise. And about this Practice, it considers not only how to do things *skilfully*, which is the consideration of *Arts*: but how to do them *profitably*, respecting either their future accountableness for Rewards or Punishments, or implying moral good or ill, and being directed by, or promotive of any Virtues; or their worldly usefulness and advantage, to the end we are driving on, or have to serve in this Life.

It notes Reason, not only contemplating these things, but *influencing* and *effecting* them. For Prudence speaks the commendableness of sever-

ral Powers. It carries with it the virtue of our Wills, as well as of our Understandings; and besides the skill to see what is good for us, includes also such influence over our other Powers, as makes them follow it, and take up therewith. A man may be a *knowing* man, that acts against the true Dictates of his own Reason. But he only is a *truly wise*, and *prudent* Person, who follows, and is guided by them. And accordingly the *wicked*, tho otherwise of never so much Knowledge, are call'd Fools, in Solomon's *Proverbs*, and other *Scriptures*.

Thus is true *Wisdom* or *Prudence* the same, as *Reason well apply'd to Practice*; or *Reason directing, and influencing us, unto what is profitable, and best for us in any case*.

Now this takes in the greatest variety of matters, even all the managements and concerns of this Life. And according to the difference of these, it comes under different denominations. When it directs to most utility, in managing the common course of our own Lives, and the ordinary affairs and accidents thereof, 'tis *common Prudence*. When, to what is most reasonable, and equal, to be exacted mutually, or allow'd, in the course of Negotiation or worldly intercourse, upon any dealings, or differences; 'tis the *prudence of Negotiators*, or men of Business. When, to what is most decent and conversible in our carriage, to best our own condition and circumstances, and to keep up fair Respect, Favour, and Society with, and procure the same from others; 'tis the *prudence of Conversation*. When 'tis shewn, in the government and conduct

Chap. I. Of the Ends of Christian Prudence.

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duct of other men : if it Directs to what is best, and the way to compals it in *War*, 'tis *Military Prudence*; if, to what makes most for common Safety, Order, and Benefit, in the conduct of a *Family*, 'tis *domestick* or *aeconomical*; if, of a *State*, 'tis *civil* or *political* Prudence. But in matters of *Religion*, which, as they are to have some separate times, so are also to run through, direct, and influence, all the other actions and affairs of this *Life*: when it shews us what are the ways of *Salvation*, and how we may compals, and go on in them; 'tis *moral*, *religious*, *spiritual* Prudence. By the other sorts, we may pass for *worldly wise*, but this is to be *wise to Salvation*.

Now for the better understanding of true Religious Wisdom, or Christian Prudence, I shall reduce what I have to say upon it, to these Heads.

Christian Prudence lies,

1. In seeing, and following, right Ends of Religion; and pursuing them only by fit, and Christian ways.

2. In taking for these, the most advantageous seasons, in tempering them to circumstances, and shewing caution to prevent harm thereby, or ill consequences.

3. As for all other inferiour, and worldly Prudence about things of this Life, in so ordering the ends, and over-ruling the ways thereof, as to keep them subservient to Religion, or as best becomes Christians.

Christian Prudence lies, in seeing, and following

Of the Ends of Christian Prudence: Chap. I.

ing right Ends of Religion; and pursuing them only by fit, and Christian ways.

I. It is to see, and set out to us right Ends. The first sign of Wisdom or Prudence, is the choice of wise and fitting Ends. And the first care of Christian Prudence, is always to propose such Ends, as are becoming Christians. It is to propose such Ends, that we may aim at them: and to make us see, and understand those Ends; that we may perceive and know, what we are to aim at.

These Ends, are the *Glory of God*, or what will bring in most Honour to him. The *Perfection and Advancement of our own Natures*, or what will make us most like to God, and afford us the fullest and truest injoyment of him, and of our selves, and of any thing else that is bea-
tifying. The *Good and Happiness of others*, or what makes most for common good, and the real benefit and advancement of our Brethren. Now all these Ends are best served by *Doing of our Duty*. We are in the best way of glorifying God, and perfecting our selves, and benefitting our Neighbours, whilst we are in the way of holy Obedience. And therefore to aim at these Ends, is in other words nothing else, but to aim to observe the Rules, and seek the Honour of our Religion, and to do our Duty in all points.

So far as concerns the End then, which it prescribes, Christian Prudence is,

I. In the first place, to propose in every point to Do our Duty. True Wisdom, it Places in an entire obedience. And accordingly all wickedness is call'd Folly, and wicked men Fools, in the holy Scriptures.

Chap. I. *Of the Ends of Christian Prudence:*

Scriptures. We must never know any wisdom, in doing unrighteously; nor set up for Prudence, by any breach of God's Commandments. All the Rules of Duty, are the most pure and perfect Wisdom. They are the wisdom of God: and who can think to shew himself wise, by pretending to correct God's Rules, or running counter unto them. When any breach of Duty makes shew of being Prudent, 'tis a mere show: it is only a false Light, that may misguide any out of the real way of Happiness, but lead none into it. Let it promise what it will, 'tis all fiction and flattery, and if we will trust God before it, we must ever esteem such a breach, when offer'd or suggested to us, only to have put on the mask of wisdom, but under that and in Truth to be mere folly.

2. Next, *in every point, to direct and make us see what is our Duty, that so we may understand whether we Do it or no.* This must go through all particular Duties, and tell us what things are aimed at, and what offices are required of us, by Each. What they ought to Do, for instance, who would approve themselves to be resign'd to God, to love or trust him, to be patient or devout towards him: to be meek, humble, sober, and mortified to this world: to be true, and just, peaceable, and charitable, among their Brethren. 'Tis the part of Christian wisdom, to teach us what we must propose to our selves, that we may discharge any of these, or any other Duties. To shew what are the instances and expressions of all particular Virtues, which should be the mark and aim of all their Professors and Undertakers.

Prudence

* *Ad Nicom. l. 2. c. 6.*
 † *De prospera & adversa Fortuna, & de Prudentia, Conc. 21. Tom. 3. p. 582.*

Prudence is the directing Virtue; 'tis Eyes to all the rest: All Virtue observing, as Aristotle says, *ὡς δεινὸν δέον, ὡς ἀπρὸς ἀνδρὶν ἄξιον*. True and sincere Prudence, † *saith S. Basil, lies in the knowledge of those things, which are to be done, or which are not to be done. Whosoever, whatsoever adheres, will never desist from the Actions of Virtue, or be left in the destruction of Wickedness.* And being to direct the Practice of each Virtue, it must imply the Skill, to see wherein the Practice thereof lies: What is to be Done in any, that we may Deserve the Name of just, humble, sober; &c. and what, in every case, or on any occasion, is to be the Work of such a Person.

Now this is an admirable and most excellent Part of Spiritual Prudence, to know what is to be done in any Duty, as we are called to discharge it by God's Providence. And 'tis great shame a Professor of any Virtue, should not be able to say wherein the Discharge of it lies, when he comes to need, and is called out to make use thereof. This has all the reproach of being ignorant of what a Man doth profess, and of being to seek in his own Business; as if an Artist were ignorant, and knows not, when he comes to set to it, what he has to do in the way of his own Art; which in the estimate of all Persons, is one of the most censurable and shameful sorts of Ignorance. Yea, 'tis extreme and desperate Folly, considering, that as he is here called upon to practise each of these Duties; so must he hereafter, to answer and be tryed by them. Now Christian Prudence is to prevent this, by storing up clear Notions of every Duty, and of the Offices

fices thereof, against such time as we shall have a call and opportunity to discharge them. *The Wisdom of the prudent*, says Solomon, is to understand his way, i. e. to know what he ought to do on all occasions. Prov. 14. 8. And this the Scripture expresses, by having our Senses exercised, to discern both good and evil, Heb. 5. 14. and calls for, as a necessary Preparative to our walking accurately or exactly. The walking *ἀκριβῶς* circumspectly or accurately, which S. Paul requires, Eph. 5.

15. he tells them is to walk as σοφοί, not as ὄποιοι, not as fools, but as wise or prudent*. Wherefore, adds he, be ye not ὄποιοι imprudent or unwise, but understanding what the Will of the Lord is: Since if they did not understand it, they were not like to be very exact in keeping it. v. 17. as prudent

Now opposite, in this matter, to both these, is the way of fleshly or worldly Wisdom. For,

1. Instead of proposing in every Point, above all things to do our Duty: It aims and Proposes in the first place, to secure our external Quiet, to serve our worldly Peace, Prosperity, or Temporal Interests. It seeks not in all things what is virtuous, but what is safe. And being for worldly Safety, it never seeks to do what 'tis like to suffer by. Its Eye is first, for keeping or encreasing these worldly Emoluments and enjoyments for our selves, our Friends, or Families, for the Church or State. It may fix upon Religion as well as the things of this Life, and carry us out for the Church, as well as for the Common Wealth. But then what it aims at, or seeks in the first place to secure in these, is not the Inward Excellence, but the outward Appendages; not their integral Parts, and

* The wise
Servant
made Ru-
ler, σοφός
is the same
as prudent
Mat. 24.
45. As the
wise as ser-
pents, ο-
σοφοί, Mat.
10. 16.
and wise
virgins,
Mat. 25. 2.

Spiritual

Spiritual Substance, but their worldly Accoutrements and Advantages. If Religion is taken in among the Good things of this World, and stands guarded and enriched by secular Laws and Privileges, Riches and Honors: Worldly Wisdom will be carried out as far to secure these worldly Appendages, when they are about Religion, as when they are about any thing else. But as for the proper and essential Parts of Religion it self, which lies in doing our Duty in every thing, or in the integrity of Faith and good Life; the Wisdom of this World sets them only in the second place. It may shew fair respect, and carry Decently towards them, even where it will give it self no trouble about them: As we see several that have no serious value for Religion, will yet be Civil to it in point of good Breeding, and as sensible of the need there is, however tis neglected by them, that it should be kept up in the esteem, yea, and practice too, of other Men. Nay, worldly Wisdom, when it rightly understands it self, will aim at it in most Cases, as serving its own wise Purposes beyond any thing else: True Virtue being, for the most part, best fitted and conducing to the Happiness and Enjoyment of both Worlds. But where it thus bears the best good Will to the inward and essential Ingredients of Religion; it is only whilst they are subservient or consistent with its own worldly Designs, being ready to throw them aside, when once they oppose it. On such Competitions, *The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be, Rom. 8. 7.* It considers then, not their Intrinsic Goodness and Excellence, but

but their Expediences; and will give them up for what it accounts higher Ends, or dearer Interests. On such occasions, its Questions are not, What will become of this Duty; or another; of Innocence and a clear Conscience; but what will become of our Estates, our Liberties, our outward Peace, Powers, Honors, Privileges, or other Enjoyments of this Life, by such, or such a Course, when 'tis deliberated on.

2. Instead of seeing in every Case, what is our Duty; *worldly Wisdom is for continuing ignorant of, and not seeing a Losing Duty.* It cares not for the Knowledge of troublesome or afflicted Truths. It is ready to look upon, and let in such as consist with worldly Ease and Interests; But afraid to understand, because 'tis loth to practice others; Conviction of a Duty, serving only to encrease the Guilt, and disturb the Quiet of those who will not practise it.

Hence comes that sleightful Saying of fleshly Wisdom in these Cases, of *leaving every Man to his own Persuasion, and not censuring any much, if he act therein according to his own Conscience.* They represent such Cases, as if it mattered not much, which Side a Man takes, and there were no important difference in the things themselves, but only in the different Opinions and Belief of Men about them. So that, let a Man but have a Persuasion of that Side, which is most easy and favourable to worldly Interest, as Men are ready enough to have in trying Cases if that will Do, and nothing else will greatly harm him in these matters.

Hence

Hence comes also, that backwardness of Con-
 versing and Discourſing with thoſe of the other
 Opinion, who are both ready to praſe, and
 able to plead for a Duty, when 'tis oppreſſed,
 and has the Croſs upon it. 'Tis a Rule of fleſh-
 ly Wiſdom at ſuch times, to look on ſuch as dan-
 gerous Perſons, whoſe Company is not ſafe.
 Their Diſcourſes, ſuch Men imagine, can only
 ſerve to make them more uneaſie in the way
 they have a mind to go. They will ſtart Sor-
 uples to diſſaſſie and unſettle a Mind that had
 no ſuch Doubts before, but had eaſily ſatiſfied
 and ſettled it ſelf upon the ſaving ſide. Or, if
 they come in the way of ſuch Diſcourſes, eſpe-
 cially when fir to do Right to Truth, by ſetting
 it off to advantage, they receive them againſt
 their Wills, and meet them, not with a religious
 Deſire, but worldly Fear. They are not thank-
 ful for the offer of a ſaving Truth, but ſorry
 for, and troubled at it; and ready to ſay to the
 Meſſengers thereof, as *Abel* did to the Prophet,
 who ſtill called upon them to hear what they
 had no Will to underſtand, that he was *his Ene-*
my, and the Troubler of Iſrael, 1 *Kings* 18. 17. and
Ch. 21. 20. When they ſet worldly Safeties above
 religious Innocence; they fear, and *bare the Lights,*
 as our Saviour * ſays, which reprove the ſecure
 ways they deſire to take. Minding not to follow
 it, they uſe care not to be hamper'd and trou-
 bled with it, and, as the Scripture ſpeaks, *will*
not have the knowledge of his ways, Job 21. 14.

* Joh 3. 20.

Hence, laſtly, when they allow themſelves to
 enquire and examin the Truth, comes that Ha-
 ſtineſs and Partiality, in taking any thing for
 ſufficient

sufficient proof, that makes for the safe side. Any serviceable, but ill grounded Presumptions about Words or Things, shall hastily be taken up and pass for Truths, which a little deliberation and enquiry would shew to be Falshoods. Former Tenets and Opinions, which usually are so very tedious and difficult to be extirpated, shall be laid aside upon much less Argument and offer of proof, than that whereby they had before been maintained. Yea, the very same things shall be offered as good Arguments, which, when offered by others, had been cast out and confuted as false ones. Variety of Topicks shall be started, to make up in number what they lack in weight: And tho all are so uncertain, that they who use them, keep themselves upon the reserve, and are afraid to stand or fall by any one alones yet they shall conclude, that some or other of them is right, and sufficient to prove what they draw from it. Which I think, is not the way of seeking Truth, but serving Interest. 'Tis to resolve upon the conclusion, before one sees the Reason which can make it good: Worldly Wisdom says, this must be held; and then, if one Topick that is pressed for proof, cannot make it out, another must. Yea, confessedly weak and false Arguments, shall pass for Evidence; and great Names, or Numbers, when they fall on this side, fleshly Wisdom will call, in its own Case, a proof of Right. Tho, looking abroad every where else in the World, where store of Opinions about other matters have these same Supports, and yet are condemned by our selves; at the same time in our Neighbors Case, it shall

be

be

be ready to Declare, that Names and Numbers are no sure Argument of Truth; but too commonly the false colour, and fair show of Error.

These, and such like, are the effects of that affected ignorance, which worldly Wisdom would be held in of any Duties, which it is like to lose by. And this is quite opposite to spiritual Prudence, and must never be yielded to by any that would make sure their eternal concerns, or pass for truly religious, honest, virtuous Dispositions.

In matters of Salvation, the best and truest security, is being in the right way. And I know no relief for any man in the wrong, but a sincere willingness to see and follow the right, when the Providence of God shall lay it sufficiently before him. Which gives no relief at all to those, who for want of love to a saving Truth, especially when persecuted, and through too much love of this world, are afraid to come in the way thereof, and unwilling to let it in. It is not enough for one that seeks to approve himself a good man, that he follow that Duty which he sets; but he must also take care to see every thing, which is his Duty, that he may follow it. The Knowledge of our Duty must not sure be ranked among indifferent things; for Faith, as well as Obedience, makes up the Gospel-terms. To believe and know what Christianity makes necessary to be known, is as requisite as to Do, what it makes necessary to be Done. Nay, to know those things, which are necessary to be Done, is as necessary as to Do them; since we cannot do them, till we know them.

Indeed,

Indeed, if the Providence of God affords not an honest mind the opportunity of such Knowledge, he will graciously connive, both at the want of Knowledge, and Practice. But if we have no mind to know, what we might know, we shall suffer, both for the want of Practice, and Knowledge. 'Tis plainly there, a want of Virtue in the heart, that causes a want of Understanding in the head: such evil doers, as our Lord says, *love darkness, and hate the light, and will not come to it, lest their deeds should be reprov'd*, Joh. 3. 19, 20. An honest mind must never be unwilling, or afraid to see its Duty, no, not where 'tis most costly. It must have a Love for it, when 'tis persecuted, as well as when 'tis applauded, when, in the eye of the world, it is a losing, as well as when it is a gaining Virtue. They must receive the love of the Truth, that they may receive the belief thereof, and to keep off, as St. Paul says, from being of their number, *that perish in their unrighteousness, by believing lyes, because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved thereby*, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. This Love will not only make them to listen to it, but to be inquisitive after it, where sufficient instruction is not voluntarily offer'd; and thankfully to see, and receive the will of God, whether it be with their worldly interest and fleshly inclination, or against them. And this is true *Docility*, and *Teachableness of Temper*, which is what the Scripture calls *the ear to hear*, or the necessary Preparative profitably to hear a Religious, or Moral Lecture. 'Tis necessary to *Faith*, especially

* Mat. 13.
9, 43. &
c. 11. 15.

of those Truths, or Laws of God, which are more unfavoury, and uneasie to flesh and blood. And being such a previous Requisite of Faith, and implied in it, 'tis sometimes in Scripture expressed thereby. *Pray that I may be delivered from unreasonable men*, says St. Paul, *for all men have not faith*, 2 Thess. 3. 2. Noting those, who receive, or reject what is tender'd, only by Humour, or inclination of Flesh and Blood, not by Reason, as men void of Faith, i.e. of a teachable Temper and Disposition.

3. *Thirdly*, Christian Prudence, is alike for taking care of both Tables; or for discharging faithfully, as all the Duties of Piety, so equally all others of Justice and Morality. Since both are equally parts of God's will, they are equally a matter of its care: and its constant aim and study is, how it may inviolably observe both, and transgress neither, but never to set one against the other. Both Tables it receives, as coming from one Authority, and claiming one Obedience. Well knowing, that he that said, *Thou shalt not worship an Idol*, said also, *Thou shalt not kill, or steal*. And if thou keep free from Idolatry, yet if thou kill, as St. James argues in this case, *thou art become a Transgressor of the Law*, Jam. 2. 11. There is no transgressing of one, to save another: nay, there is no breaking of one, to save all. For whosoever shall keep the whole Law besides, saith the same Apostle, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, v. 10. And if for breaking that one, he will be punish'd as if he had broke all: there cannot be any room left, to think of breaking one, tho it were upon pretence to save all.

all. Which I call a Pretence, because, indeed, it is a mere Pretence. For the Commandments never oppose one another, and we can never reasonably pretend to break the latter, that we may keep the former: since, if we please, we may at all times keep both, and as we never can have any Authority, so neither can we be under any necessity of breaking either.

The Effect and Consequence I shall observe from hence, is,

1. First, *That we never oppose the first, to the second Table.* As the Pharisees, who, to keep the third Commandment, taught men to break the fifth: not suffering a man to do any thing for his father and mother, after once he had said, *It is Corban, that is, a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, or, I interdict, what I have, by the vow Corban, from ever being helpful unto thee;* a Form, among the Jews, of forswearing to help others. Which, instead of being an approved way, of keeping first Table-Duties, our Lord charges, as setting up the Commandments of men for Doctrines, and making void God's Law through their Traditions, Mat. 15. 5, 6, 9. Mar. 7. 11. We must not suffer our selves to be carried on, to break the fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth Commandments; i. e. to throw off Duty to our Parents, Natural or Civil, or any Obligation of Morality, of Justice, Truth, or Gratitude towards men, for the Honour and Glory of God, or for, either the new setting up and erection, or the continuance and preservation, of a more Orthodox, pure, and spiritual way of Worship and Devotion.

It is too common among the worldly wise,

to consent to several violations of Morality, for the Preservation, as they say, of God's Church, or Advancement of his Glory. Meaning thereby, the Glory and Preservation of a true and Orthodox Profession of Faith, and of a pure and Gospel-Worship. And the Glory sought thereby for these, is to make them externally glorious; to seat them in worldly Sway, Power, or Privilege, that men may own the Confessions, and pay the Worship, with external ease and encouragement to themselves, or without Persecutions.

But is not God to be glorified and obeyed in his other Precepts, as well as in these Confessions of Faith, and pure Devotions? And is it a way to glorifie him in one point, by disgracing him in others? Will he receive so much Glory and Service, by the Orthodoxy, as Dis-service and Dishonour, by the Immorality? Is not God glorious in his Moral Attributes, of Justice, Faithfulness, and the like, as well, as in the Unity, and Spirituality of his Nature? And is it not as necessary for those, that would duly glorifie him, to copy out and display his Glory, in these Moral Excellencies, as to own and declare it in the other? Nay, is he not particularly careful, to call us to an imitation and Transcript of his Glory in these: *to be merciful, as he is merciful*, Luc. 6. 36. and *holy, as he who hath called us is holy*, and that in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16? And to tell us, that to be created after his Image, the new man must put away lying, and other immoralities, and be formed in Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. 4. 24, 25, &c. And must not the Church be

be preserved, in true ways of Justice, and Moral Duties, as well as of Worship, and Confessions of Faith? Ought it not to be as much concerned, for good Practice, as for good Prayers; and will it not get as much, by good Life, as by being Orthodox? Nay, can immoral men be saved in any Religion; or will a good Worship recommend any to God in evil-doing; or shall they enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, that call Christ Lord, Lord, but do not obey him? There is no way of glorifying God, but by being intire in our Duty, and performing all that he prescribes us. Nor of advancing his Church, but by advancing the Practice of all those Duties, which are to recommend, to save, and signalize his Church. We may confess the true Faith, and Practise a pure and spiritual Worship, in keeping all the other Commandments, and without the breach of any; yea, and that in Persecutions, if we please, and dare run hazards. And so may all other persons, if they have the heart to do like us. And 'tis not for us to transgress any of them, only as a way to remove hard Tryals from them, or from our selves. Which is not to glorifie God, or our Duty, or advance his Church; but to discredit and disserve both, for our own carnal ease and advantage.

2. Secondly, *That a true Christian be ready to suffer, for any point of Morality and Justice, as well as for any point of Orthodoxy in Faith, or Purity in Divine Worship.* For upon which soever of these they suffer, the cause is Religious, and they are alike Confessors.

The Duties of the *first Table*, indeed, have God, not only for their Author, but likewise for their Object; and so are more particularly stiled *Piety*, or *Duties towards God*, on that account. As are likewise some Duties enjoined in the *second Table*, viz. those of the *fifth Commandment*, towards *Parents* and *Magistrates*, who are in *God's place*, and, on that Account, are sometimes in Scripture call'd *Gods*: *Thou shalt not revile the Gods*, saith the Law, meaning thereby the Rulers, *Exod. 22. 28.* And thus St. Paul calls it * *shewing piety at home*, when *Children* relieve and *requite their Parents*, *1 Tim. 5. 4.* And the undutiful, are stiled † *sons of Belial*, and *impious*; and *Disloyalty*, *impiety*, or *Secundum Sacrilegium*, a *Second Sacrilege*, as * *Tertullian's* Phrase is.

* *Εὐσεβείῳ*

† *1 Sam.*

10. 27.

* *Apol. c.*

35.

But all other Duties are enjoined by God, and performed for his sake, and are as truly Parts of Religion, and he accordingly stands upon them, as those, which are more immediately referr'd to God himself. For Religion lies in keeping of the Laws of God at large, or in all the Duties of Justice and Morality, as well as in the Duties and Acts of Piety. *The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation*, that is, the *Christian Religion*, consists in *living soberly, and righteously*, no less than in *living godly in this present world*, according to St. Paul's distribution of Duties, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* And *pure and undefiled Religion*, St. James describes by the moral Acts, of *visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ones self unspotted from the world*, *Jam. 1. 27.* And *the Kingdom of God*, or the Religion of Christ, the Apostle makes to consist in *Righteousness, and Peace,*

Peace, those second-Table and moral Duties, as well as in *joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 14. 17. So that to suffer for any second Table Duties, is to suffer for God's sake, since God enjoins them. And to suffer for Religion, since Religion implies them. Tho they do not so immediately respect God, yet are they as much required by Religion, and as truly parts thereof, as those that do.

Now it is suffering for Religion, that makes men *Confessors* and *Martyrs*. And this they do, who suffer for the moral parts thereof.

What the Gospel declares *blessed*, is being persecuted for *Righteousness sake*. *Blessed are they, which are persecuted for Righteousness sake*, Mat. 5. 10. And if ye suffer for *Righteousness sake*, happy are ye, 1 Pet. 3. 14. And there is as true, and acceptable Righteousness, in moral Duties, as in any Confessions of Orthodoxy, or Purity of Worship and Devotions.

The Confession, which *Christ* requires of us, is to *confess him and his words*, Luk. 9. 26. And the *Martyrs* in the *Revelations*, are expressed by *suffering for the Testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God*, Rev. 20. 4. And we have as good word, and command for these, as we have for any others.

The Sufferers he respects, are those that *suffer for his Name*, Mat. 10. 22. But all the Duties required by his Gospel, are call'd by his Name. And all the Acts of Morality, which stood before on Natural Obligation, now, since he has enjoined them, and his Spirit helps us to perform them, being practised out of Christian Principles, and through the Grace of *Christ*, are all

become *Christian*. And the Losses he recompenses, are Losses for his sake; *he that loses his life for my sake, shall find it*, Mat. 10. 29. Or, as 'tis in *St. Mark*, *For his sake, and the Gospels*, Mark 8. 35. And is it not purley for his sake, and in regard to him, that we perform any second Table Duties, when we are sure to lose by them? And are not those Losses for the sake of the Gospel, which are purely out of Conscience to Gospel-injunctions?

Thus are all the Comforts and Encouragements, the Approbation and Acceptance of Gospel-Sufferers, common and alike to both Tables. And he is as true a Confessor, that, in Peril of Suffering, gives his testimony against any Acts of Unrighteousness and Immorality; as he that doth the same, against any false Articles of Faith, or Acts of false Worship and Idolatry. I know among Good things, there is a difference in degrees. And especially he that suffers, for owning *Jesus to be the Christ*, suffers for the whole of the Gospel, which is more than some particular Duties thereof, whether relating to Faith, Worship, or moral Practice. But sufferings for any, are all of the same kind and quality; they are alike Religious, and the Sufferers alike *Christ's Martyrs and Confessors*.

And suitable, is the received Judgment concerning Sufferers, in these cases. *John the Baptist* was one of God's blessed Martyrs, tho the Cause he suffer'd for, was that of the seventh Commandment, or declaring against an unlawful and incestuous Marriage, Mat. 14. 3, 4, 5, 10. The persecuted Prophets were brave and Noble Confessors among the Jews. Tho what they suffered for, and

and sought to revive, was not always, or only, a right Worship; but the Duties of Morality and Justice, in Declaring freely and undauntedly, not only against *Idols*, or *Calves*, and *Groves* and *Higb Places*; but against *Falshood*, and *Rapine*, and *Violence*, and *Perversions of Justice*, and other *Grievous immoralities*, wherewith the *Jewish State* was over-run, in those *Degenerate and Corrupt times*. Thus, the *Holy * Women and Virgins*, were ranked in the *List of Confessors and Martyrs*, who would *Dye*, or *Disfigure themselves*, rather than yield their *Bodies to the Lusts of Tyrants and Persecutors*. And *St. Diomysius of Alexandria* † tells *Novatus*, *It would be as Glorious a Martyrdom*, nay, in my judgment, says he, *a Greater*, for *a man to suffer Death to prevent Schisms*, and the rending and tearing of the Church among themselves: *as to suffer the same for Profession of Christianity*, at the Hands of *Persecutors*. So long as we are suffering for any Duty of our holy Religion, be it of *Piety*, or of *Justice and Morality*, the difference, as to this, is not much. To make a *Martyr*, or *Confessor*, it matters not for which Table 'tis, so long as it is for either. And accordingly, *to be beheaded for the Word of God*, which extends alike to both, is the Character of the *Martyrs*, Rev. 20. 4.

Now contrary to this, is the visible sense and carriage of too many persons. For many, alas! even of those, who are free to expose themselves, and to suffer in testifying against *False Worship and Idolatry*: seem much more indifferent and unconcern'd, about suffering or standing out, and Declaring against *Unrighteousness* and

* Euseb.
Hist. Ec-
cles. 1. 8.
c. 14. p.
312, 313.

† Ap. Eu-
seb. Hist.
Eccl. 1. 6.
c. 45.

and Immorality. By Religion, they are wont to mean chiefly *Confession of Articles*, and *Purity of Worship*. And to rate that, to be *suffering for Religion*, when they *suffer for them*: or that to be acting for the Glory of God, and the Good of Religion; when this acting is to serve them. Nay, when 'tis only to serve and secure those worldly Interests and Priviledges, which are tacked to them. And tho, in Performance of this Service, they take a greater Liberty, and make bold with Moral Duties, only that they may secure such external Freedom and Encouragement, for such pure Worship and Confessions. As if that God, who has commanded one, had not commanded the other as much. Or, as if we could oblige him, by breaking some of his Commands, to save others. Yea, when there is no need of, or help by any such Breach, to save any, but all the intent and use thereof, is only to save our selves. Which, tho it be Right, and Reasonable, in the Eye of the worldly Wise; is not sure the way to be wise for God, or for his Glory, so far as that is made to lie in our Duty; nor must ever pass for that Wisdom, which comes by *Christ Jesus*.

C H A P. II.

Other Ends of Christian Prudence

A Fourth End proposed by *Christian Prudence*, is, as to discharge the Duties, so to serve, and promote the Honour of Religion. To be wise for

for God, is to be wise for Religion, which is the only acceptable, and effectual way, of serving and honouring him. And to contrive wisely for Religion, must always study and seek the Honour of Religion. For, proportionably to the Honour and Esteem the World has for it, is like to be their Acceptance, and Observance thereof. Spiritual Prudence therefore, must ever take this care of Religion, by acting so in all things where it is concern'd, as may set it up highest in mens Opinion, and gain it the most cordial Respect, and greatest Reverence from them. They must consider in these matters, what serves best, to convince men of the Truth and Sincerity, to manifest the Power and Efficacy, to set out the Worth and Excellency thereof. And never take up with any ways, how promising soever on other Accounts, that would afford considerate men a Ground in Reason, to suspect Religion, as if it were a fictitious thing; and the Profession thereof, as if it were Hypocrisie. Or to fanſie all its magnified Power, to be real weakness, and unable to carry men on, to the Practice of what before they did profess, when, in any trying Case, they are brought to the push.

Such Reflections bring Religion under the greatest Dishonour and Disadvantage. And therefore whosoever would act prudently for it, must have an especial Eye to avoid any thing, that would make Religion evil spoken of. For this, God was highly offended with the *Jews*, that *through them, the Name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles*, Rom. 2. 24. And for this, the Apostle had great indignation against some False Christi-

Christians, that *through them the way of Truth was* *evil spoken of*, 2 Pet. 2. 2. And to prevent any thing of this among Christians, are those Commands of God, of *walking worthy of the Gospel*, Eph. 4. 1. Phil. 1. 27. *So as becometh Saints*, Eph. 5. 3. *Of adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, Tit. 2. 10. *Of walking worthy of God*, and those high Priviledges of *his Kingdom and Glory*, 1 Thess. 2. 12. and *worthy of the Lord*, Col. 1. 10. Thus, would Christ have it the care of all his Followers, not meanly and sneakingly to serve Religion, but affectionately to espouse, and industriously to answer and adorn, to magnifie and do it Honour in the eyes of men. To approve, in every thing, its Verity and Sincerity; to demonstrate its Efficacy; to maintain its Dignity; and manifest its Worth and Excellency before them. Whatever it receives at the Hands of other men, yet thus must *Wisdom or Religion be justified*, i. e. declared just, and made victorious and triumphant, *by her own Children*, Mat. 11. 9. A prudent Christian, is to *provide for good Report*, Phil. 4. 8. *for things honest in the sight of all men*, 2 Cor. 8. 21.

And from this I note, That the aim of Religious Prudence, (contrary to what too oft appears in *Fleshy wisdom*) is to own, and do Honour to any Duties:

I. *Not only internally in our minds, but externally in our outward Carriage*: That must be made visible before others, which doth Honour to it before others. And this is what every Duty of Religion, or every necessary Point of Christian Faith and Practice, claims at our hands. We

owe

owe it an external as well an internal Service, and must not only pay our acknowledgments to it inwardly and invisibly in our own minds, but, as we are call'd thereto, visibly and apparently before others. *Provide for honest things*, says St. Paul, *not only in the sight of the Lord*, who sees what is inward or in the heart, *but also in the sight of men*, who see it not, till externally owned, and exposed to view in Conversation, 2 Cor. 8. 21. We must offer up, and present to God, our Bodies and bodily appearances, as well as our Souls and their invisible motions, *for a living, holy, and acceptable Sacrifice*, Rom. 12. 1. *Glorifying God both with Souls and Bodies*, which are both his, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Whatever ye do, let all be done to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. And by making our Good things visible, he is most glorified. We please him by internals, which are secret, and which will do him Glory at the last, when they come to be openly exposed. But what Glory do they to him at present, if they are not externally manifest. *Gloria multorum indicium* * Ep. 102. *constat*, says * Seneca. *Est consentiens laus bonorum, incorrupta vox bene judicantium de excellenti virtute*, says † Cicero. So, what doth glorify, must be notified to many. And this appearing externally honourable, or glorious in the eyes of men, is what God stands much upon; having many times forborn, what otherwise he had resolved to do, lest his Name should be polluted before the Heathen, among whom they were, and in whose sight he had made himself known unto them, Ezek. 20. 9, 14, 22.

Some Virtues, indeed, are not so observable by men: being more purely Spiritual in their Natures, and less Publick in their Use and Exercise.

And

† *Tusc. Quest. 1. 3. sub initio.*

And others, that fall more under view, good men will seek to keep as private as they can, to preserve the greater Purity of intention, and prevent all by-ends of worldly interest, or ostentation; as our Saviour directs, about *private Devotion, Alms, and Fasting*, Mat. 6. 1, 5, 16. But what Duties are publick, he expects we should practise publickly; and, whensoever we have a Call, to profess, or perform them before others, that we should externally shew them forth, and not smother any. They must then, not only burn within us, but shine out to others. Among ill men, and in a crooked Generation, we must shine as Lights to guide them, Phil. 2. 15. Our inward Wisdom, must be shown forth in our works and good Conversation, Jam. 3. 13. Our Light must shine before men, that they may glorifie our Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 16. We must be blameless, and barmless, as the Sons of God, without rebuke, not only before God, but likewise before them, Phil. 2. 15. As Zachariah and Elizabeth, walked in all the Ordinances of the Lord, blameless, or not to be taxed by the world, for any apparent Breaches, Luk. 1. 6. On all such occasions, not content with an inward, they are careful to manifest an outward Holiness: not neglecting any Duties, or appearing like those, who either transgress, or omit a Virtue, when they are call'd to an open Discharge thereof.

And this external owning of every Part of Religion, especially when we are brought in danger for it, which is the great Temptation to conceal or dissemble it, is the Virtue of Confession. This Christ himself did before Pilate, before whom, as St. Paul says,

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says, he witnessed a good Confession, 1 Tim. 6. 13. And this he expects from all his Followers. He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 10. 32, 33.

The Faith of the heart, says the * Comment of an * Com. Ancient and Learned Author upon this Place, will ment. Au- no more avail, without the Confession of the mouth, thoris in- than the Confession of the mouth will, without the Matt. inter Faith of the heart. And if it must be enough for Christ opera Cbryso that we know him, tho we confess him not before men: therefore it must be enough for us, that he knows us, tho at the last he confesses us not before men. 'Tis not sufficient for any, to say, I with-hold the Truth in my heart, and in the mean while disown it before the World. And therefore he says not, be that confesseth me in his heart, but be that confesseth me before men. This Confession or Denial of him, is the Confession, or Denial, of any Point of Faith or Practice, or Part of his Doctrine. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, says he in another Place, Mar. 8. 38. Luc. 9. 26. 'Tis not enough in heart inwardly to receive these, unless, on just occasion, we are ready openly to profess them. For with the Heart man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10.

This Confession is made, one way by words; as St. Paul speaks of Confession with the mouth unto Salvation. And another way, by Actions: for a man may deny a Duty in deed, as well as in word, as the Scripture speaks of those, who profess God in words, but in works deny him, Tit. 1. 16.

And

And a Duty is thus denied in deed, when, on any just and publick Call to Practice it, we omit and dissemble it. 'Tis not enough in this case, to pretend we adhere to it in our Minds, unless we shew our selves to be among its Adherents, by our Practice. Our Deeds, as well as our Words, are among the necessary Acknowledgments. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my father which is in Heaven, Mat. 7. 21, 22.* The manifestation of the Principle, must be by its effects; and of the tree, by its fruits, *for every tree is known by its own fruits, Luk. 6. 44.* When a Question arises, or a Test comes, to try and discover the true Adherents to any Duty; 'Tis not the Heart which is unseen, but the visible Practice which must determin it. *Shew me thy faith by thy works:* It being our Works that must declare what our fixt belief or opinion about it is. *Jam. 2. 18.* To Neglect it, or Conceal our adherence to it out of shame thereof, Christ accounts a Denying it. *He that shall be ashamed of my word of him will I be ashamed, Luk. 9. 26.* And S. Paul speaking of his Sufferings for the Gospel, opposes our Practice of a suffering Duty, when we are called to suffer for him, to our Denying him: *If we suffer, we shall reign with him, if we deny him, he also will deny us, 2 Tim. 2. 12.* When Men come to Search after the Retainers to any Duties, they cannot judge by what is invisible, but only by what externally appears: So that he, who doth not practise when called to it, in human account is esteemed to disclaim it.

But 'tis much more Denied in Deed, if, when out to the Tryal, they do not only neglect to Practise it, but deliberately practise what is directly opposite and inconsistent with it. If any Christian, when called to the Test, would burn Incense on the beathen Altars, and sacrifice to their gods; he did really, and was esteemed thereby, to Disown his Christianity, and to Deny Christ and his Words, as if he had renounced them with his Lips.

Now, opposite to this way, of Honouring all the Duties of Religion, by verbal and real Confessions, and external Appearances, is the way of worldly Wisdom. It is for such ways of owning them, as suits best with the Ends and Conveniences of this World. It will outwardly Practise and Profess fashionable Duties, such as are in vogue, and the World Honors and Speaks well of. But as for those that are publicly Decry'd, or bear against the wicked Customs received, or the Ends and Projects pursued and driven on in this World, which expose to the Censure thereof; it is not for manifesting, but concealing them. It is for owning there, only in the Mind, which can give the World no offence, because the Mind is not under this Worlds notice; or, for owning and practising in private or out of sight: As Nicodemus did at first, who came to our Savior by night, Joh. 3. 2. and those many of the chief Rulers, who, tho' they believed on him, did not confess him, because of the Pharisees, loving the praise of men more than the praise of God, John 12. 42, 43. Not that worldly Wisdom is for Heart Duties; being no more for inward than for outward Holiness, further than it

agrees, or makes for worldly Ease and Interests. Nay, indeed, being less for that, because 'tis harder to perform, and more uncouth and opposite to Flesh and Blood. But what Duties it can Conform to and Comply withal, it is for keeping up in the Heart, not exposing in open Practice, when that is like to give the World offence, or cause hard Names and Censures. Or, what it cannot comply with, it is for counterfeiting and Pretending to serve in Heart, which lying out of sight, is more easie to be Pretended, and not so easie to be Detected and Disproved.

2. This external owning of Religious Prudence, is not only in times of Peace, but of Persecutions. It is confessing it under impendent Sufferings, as often as we are called either to Profess or Practise an oppressed Duty before others. To Confess it then, is truly to Do Honor to Religion. It shews it true and unfeigned, and that the Pretenders to it believe themselves in what they say of it, when they are ready to venture all there-upon: In suffering for Religion, they give Testimony to it; it proves it strong and powerful, admirable in Motives, and mighty in Effects, able to set men above this World, to outstand the hardest Tryal, and conquer all the World counts terrible. 'Tis to Honor it, when the World explodes it, and seek to cast all the Disgrace they can upon it: To own it, when its own Followers are ready to fall off and desert it. The Days of Suffering for Righteousness, are worst times for Flesh and Blood; but the best and most advantageous for serving Religion, and doing Honour unto God. *When you suffer as Christians,*

lays

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35

says St. Peter, and are reproached for the Name of Christ, on your part he is glorified, 1 Pet. 4. 14, 16. So that in the Eye of Spiritual Prudence, whose aim is to be wise for Religion, and to see what serves it, not what serves our selves; these times of Persecution, instead of exempting from such Confessions, are their most proper seasons.

Accordingly, this Confession of any Duties, is particularly required of us, and call'd for at such times. We are to be blameless, unrebukeable, as the Sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, Phil. 2. 15. Be not ashamed of me, and of my words, says our Saviour, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, which was wholly bent on Persecution, Mar. 8. 38. When he calls for Confession of him before men, Mat. 10. 32. he puts the hardest Cases, and confronts the Doing of our Duty with the Dearest worldly Interests: and there bars all opposite influence and interposition of Fear of men, that would hinder Confession; and strikes it down with the greater and more powerful Fear of God, which will hinder Denying. Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: but rather fear him, who is able to destroy, both Soul, and Body, in Hell, v. 28. He allows us not to be stopt of Confession, by regard to Father or Mother, Son or Daughter: He that loves Father, or Mother, more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth Son, or Daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me, v. 37. Nay, nor in regard to our own Lives: He that finds his life, viz. out of the way of confessing me and my words, shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, or for mine and the Gospel's, as St. * Mark, shall find it, v. 39. Ch. 8. 35.

The Cross on any Duties, must be no Discouragement: the Cross must be taken up with the Duty, and not the Duty let alone, or rejected for the Crosses sake: *He that doth not take his Cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me, v. 38.* Nay, at some times, he must take it up daily, and follow me, *Luc. 9. 23.* And if then, when he must bear his Cross, tho it be in Neglect of his Dearest Relations, yea of his own Life, he doth not for all that keep on in my way, and come after me; he cannot be my Disciple, *Luc. 14. 26, 27.*

Thus strict is our Blessed Lord, in Calling for this Christian ~~simplicity~~, or harmless Constancy & free owning of him and his Laws, even when beset with the greatest worldly Perils. Very Frightful were these Perils, in the Apostles days, which Drive many from this way of Courageous Confessors, to shifts of Deserting Cowardice: tempting them sometimes to conceal themselves, and to forsake the Public Assemblies, against both which St. Paul absolutely declares, *Rom. 10. 9, 10. & Heb. 10. 23, 25*; and sometimes to fall quite off from the way of Christ, to that of their Persecutors. And what now, doth he that sits upon the Throne, say to such Persons? As he that continueth constant, or overcomes, shall inherit all things: So the fearful, or cowardly ~~servants~~, and the Unbelievers, or false and unfaithful, ~~answ~~; i. e. the timorous & mistrustful Deserters, who fell in their Tryals for want of Faith and Patience, formerly held the Glory of Saints, tho now made the scoff and derision of prophane Spirits; these, says he, together with Murderers, and Whore-mongers, and Idolaters, & all Lyars, shall have their part in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second

cond Death, Rev. 21. 7, 8. Among all Reprobates, yea, before all, he first places these Cowardly Deserters for their share, in this Lake of Fire and Brimstone, says * Tertullian.

* Inter omnes Reprobos,

imò ante omnes; timidis autem, inquit, &c. Tert. Scorp. c. 12.

The Foundation of this Confessorian Constancy and Freeness, is † Love to Christ, and to his Laws and Doctrines: For, when Love is perfect, as St. John says, it casts out Fear, which, in time of Danger, is the Parent of all Revolting tergiversations, or hypocritical and unlawful Compliances. And herein, adds he, is our Love made perfect, that we may have Boldness, *παρρησία*, this Freeness and Fearlessness in Confession, which it is the Perfection of Love to inspire us with, in the Day of Judgment, or when brought before any Tribunal for the Cause of Christ: because, as he is, so are we in this world, viz. in a Persecuted state, wherein we are to shew this Constancy and Courage, as he did, 1 Job. 4. 17, 18. And the Cure of Cowardice, or the Spirit of Fear, St. Paul notes is by the Spirit of Love, which is the Spirit of Power, 2 Tim. 1. 7. And therefore the Spirit writing to the Church of Ephesus, which was, it seems, in danger of falling into the Practices of the temporizing Gnosticks, when he calls them || back to their former Courage and Constancy in Tryals, bids them return to their first Love, Rev. 2. 4. This Love to Christ, and the ways of Godliness, when, in a great many, it is strong enough for times of Peace; is apt to be much shaken, and impaired, in their hearts, in times of Tryal and Persecutions. Because iniquity, i. e. of Persecutors, as the Context shews, shall abound,

† The Spirit of the Martyrs was not broken or dismay'd by all the Terrors of the Tormentors. διὰ τὸ τὴν τιμίαν ἀγαπᾶν, because their Love was perfect, and had cast out Fear, says Philas the Martyr in his Epistle to his Church, ap. Euseb. 1. 8. c. 10. || Vid. Hammond. Annot. in lcg.

love of many, says our Saviour, *shall wax cold*, *Mat. 24. 12.* And as it decays, so will the Confessorian Constancy and Courage, which is shewn by virtue thereof, and timorous Haltings, Compliances, and Revolts, will still succeed in its place. *But he that shall endure unto the end, or whose Love and Constancy at such times shall both hold out, the same shall be saved, v. 13.*

But now, quite contrary to this, is the way of worldly Prudence, which is never for professing Persecuted Truths, or practising Persecuted Duties. Its care is, not how to confess, but how to conceal, or Dissemble its Sentiments, at such times. Instead of looking then to the Duty, it looks to it self: and considers, not what is Good, but what is safe. Distressed Virtue, at the best, it neglects, or Disclaims in open view: which it thinks to make up, by approving, or practising it in Private. It divides it self, between God, and the World, and seeks to content him by a Secret, or invisible Observance; and to content it too, by open and visible Neglects, or Violations, of oppressed Religion and Righteousness, on such Tryals.

But now, instead of conscionable lawful Prudence, this is nothing but wicked Subtily, and mere carnal, or Satanical Suggestions. For to persuade, on any trying Call, not to shew forth an incumbred and afflicted Duty, but to let it alone, is the Voice of Flesh and Blood, not of Religion; it never comes from God, but from *Satan*. So *Christ* told *Peter*, when he counselled him to fly the Obedience of the Cross, and, instead of that costly way of Doing the Will of God,

God, to look more to himself. *Get thee behind me, Satan,* saith he, *thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men,* or more carnal humane Wisdom, *Mat. 16. 23. 24.* And thereupon, he immediately repeats this Precept to his Disciples, telling them, *If any man will come after me, he must not hearken to Peter's Advice, to stand still, or step out of the way, when the Cross is laid upon any Duty; but take up his Cross, and follow me.* And follow me, i. e. going on still, under the Burden of the Cross, in the Duty whereto I call: and going on also therein after my Example, as you see, notwithstanding the Cross now in my way, I do, v. 24.

It is a deceitful Shuffling on both sides, playing fast and loose, or Halting between two Opinions: as those of Israel did; who, in their hearts, stood right for God; but yet, to please *Ahab* and *Jezabel*, and for fear of the Times, externally Complied in the Worship of *Baal*, and went to his Sacrifices. Whom *Elijah* the Prophet reproved, saying, *How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him, 1 King. 18. 21.* If it were enough, thus to serve one invisibly in our Hearts, whilst we visibly serve the other in external appearance, there would be no necessity of what our Lord declared, that *no man can serve two Masters, Mat. 6. 24.*

It is, at best, but to affect the Duty, whilst we plainly fly all the Scandal, and Offence thereof. Which, if it be a lawful Prudence, there is no ingagement to preach up Persecuted Truths against

Persecuting Errours, as St. Paul thought there was for all the Cross that lay upon it, when he preached down *Circumcision* so zealously set up by the Jews, Gal. 5. 11. There will be an end of the *Scandal of the Cross*, which, when tack'd to any Duty, will be no longer a Scandal, or an Occasion of Sin, if we may lawfully pass it by, and let the Duty it is laid upon alone, without Sin. Especially, *taking up the Cross*, when placed in the way of Confession, could never be the *Condition of Worthiness in Christ's Disciples*, as our Lord declares it is, Mat. 10. 32, 38. and afterwards, in opposition to Peter's Advice of ways to Prevent it, by forbearing the Duties burden'd with it, which he imputes, as I noted, to carnal Wisdom, and the Suggestion of Satan, Mat. 16. 23, 24. Men may *bear the Cross*, when it comes upon them by Necessity, and they cannot help it. But then only they *take it up*, when they might let it alone if they would, viz. by forbearing, or avoiding the Duty, whereto it comes annexed. And if they may be worthy Disciples, in shunning it, it can be no Condition of their Worthiness, to take it up. Lastly, were it no Point of Duty and Religion, for which they were sure to be finally rewarded, this *taking up a Duty with the Cross upon it*, could have nothing inviting here, for them to Glory and Triumph in it. And yet this, our Saviour, and his Blessed Apostles, direct all good Christians to do at such times. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, or for Righteousness sake, as Ch. 3. 14. happy are you, for the Spirit of Glory rests upon you, 1 Pet. 4. 14. If any man suffer as a Christian, let him glorify God on that behalf, v. 16.

3. In

3. In these Confessions, it is another Part of Spiritual Prudence; *not to stay till we are under an absolute Necessity, or Force, but to confess with Freedom.* I do not say, this is absolutely necessary in all cases. And when there is utmost Peril, the Torture extreme, and Confession Capital; the case is Pitiabie, and to wait, in case of several Truths or Duties, for Proof from Prosecutors, seems more excusable. But this is only connivence, and Condescension to Humane weakness: and to be Free in owning any necessary Articles, or part of Virtue and Godliness, on a just Call there-to, openly preferring it to our own Lives, is the Praise of Confessors, and most excellent and rewardable in it self. * *Being judicially asked, he voluntarily confesses it; being condemn'd, he gives thanks for it, says Tertullian of the Primitive Confessors.* This again, is for the Honour of Duty and Religion, that its Followers are not driven by Necessity, but led to own it by Affection. 'Tis not for its Reputation, that its own Servants would do no more for it, than they needs must; nor appear in its Cause, so long as they can lie hid. This argues it to be little beloved by its own Retainers; and that the acknowledgments it has from them at such Trying times, is out of Fear, which needs to be driven; not from Love, much less from Zeal, which would shew forth, not only a free, but Forward Motion. Men may serve the Duty, when they shew not their Adherence, till they are necessitated to it; but to Honour it, they must move of themselves, and be prompt and forward to profess it.

And this Freeness, as it is requisite to the Honour

* Interrogatus, vel ultro confitetur; Damnat, gratias agit, Tert. Apol. c. 1.

nour of any Part of Duty, or Religion : So, I think, is implied in the Nature of Confession. Conviction, indeed, may be a forced thing, and we are at Liberty there to plead Not-Guilty, and not own the Charge, till it is judicially proved upon us. And this may be taken by all Malefactors, in what they are ashamed of, and acknowledge to be ill things. But Confession, is to be our own, and the Praise of it lies in being a voluntary and free thing : and of our selves we are to profess and own there, on any just Call, when, in way of publick Tryal, or Private Usefulness, we are put to the Question. And this is the way in any Duties, which we profess to glory and triumph in. When we stay to have it Proved upon us, as if it were a thing we would not own, but are ashamed of, we are Convicted as Criminals. Or, if we come in as Confessors there, it is, as having before voluntarily and freely chosen, to be or Do what we plainly saw would bring us into Danger : we are Confessors, only in respect of what we practised or Professed under terrifying Prospects before, not in Respect of our present Answer. But when we are ready to own it our selves, and to glory in what they accuse, that is a further Degree, and then we *answer as Confessors*. And this Freedom and Promptness, to own and profess such persecuted Truths or Duties, was most eminently seen, and honourably discharged, as I noted from *Tertullian* ; yea, sometimes to Excess, in the Primitive Liberty or *anaphora* of the *Ancient Confessors*. The Zeal of Numbers, carrying them, under the greatest Hazards, and amidst the most terrifying Exam-

Examples, to profess before they were accused, and Publish in open Court their own Faith, whilst they saw their Brethren Tryed and Condemned for it, as we learn abundantly from the Story of those Times.

4 I shall add in the last Place, that 'tis for the Honour of Religion in these Confessions, that *they be divested of too scrupulous, and nice a Care, of our worldly Interests.*

I do not condemn all prudent Care of Confessors, for securing their worldly Concerns, when their Duty is first secured, and they are not wanting, either by Word or Deed, to assert and honour it, as they are call'd to it. When they have taken care to save Religion, and a good Conscience first, they may be allowed a just and reasonable Care for saving what they have in this World, next: it being reasonable, that they should save what they well can, when 'tis against Reason and Religion too, that they should lose any thing. And thus the *Apostles* and *Primitive Christians* about *Jerusalem*, when they saw the Storm coming on, sold their Lands and private Properties, putting the Prices into the hands of the Church, in Preparation for the approaching Wants and Confiscations, *Acts. 4. 34, &c.* But I think they are most Honourable to Religion, when they are not most Solicitous at such times, nor exact in all Arts and Methods, of indemnifying themselves. Such Confessions are a Tryal of the Spirituality of our Minds, how able they are to contemn this World, and how far they are set above it, and how strong their Faith and Trust in God is. And we acquit our selves best, in manifesting

nifesting this, when we only shew a moderate Care, and take the plainest and most reputable ways of Saving : when we are not scrupulously exact in things, or immoderately Solicitous, or stretch to the utmost Lengths we dare in any indemnifying Arts, which may sully this Profession and Proof of Spirituality, by a suspicion of Earthly mindedness ; and of Faith in God's Providence by signs of immoderate Care for our selves. Our Sufferings, as well as our Service, is Honourable and Useful to God and Religion, at such times. A Prophane and Atheistical World, and an exploded Duty, need a suffering Testimony. And when we may exalt, and advance our Duty by our Losses, as well as by our Practice and Professions, godly Wisdom, looks more to serve God and Goodness, than to secure our selves ; bidding such Loss of Goods welcome, and *taking it joyfully*, as the manner was of the Primitive † Saints. And tho it will not rashly and unnecessarily, without a Call, throw its worldly things away : yet, when 'tis call'd thereto, it will not be over-careful, or scrupulously inquisitive how to keep them.

† Heb. 10.
34.

Now all this is contrary, in the aim of *worldly Wisdom*. Its great End, is to be Free and forward in getting, but forced in losing worldly things ; to move of it self in any way of compassing, but to move no faster than 'tis driven, in any way of parting with them. It will readily neglect any thing that will occasion present Damage ; but it knows not how to omit what promises any removal or abatement of it. Worldly Wisdom is wise for worldly Goods, but wise against

against worldly Evils : and never Free to serve the Spirit against the Flesh, to seek the Honour of Religion by worldly Disgrace, or to Advance and enrich it by its own Loss and Impoverishment.

4. In Pursuit of this End of the *Honour of Religion*, it is another Rule of Spiritual Prudence, *not to change our Doctrines, as we change our Interests, or to do alike our selves, to what we have usually condemn'd in others.* To maintain, for instance, the indefeasible Power of Princes, whilst they are of our Religion ; but of the People, when Princes are of a contrary Religion. To preach up Toleration, and Temper, and Liberty of Conscience, whilst we are under, and kept down ; but as mere Hot-spurs, to decry all Temper, and screw up all to our apprehension, shewing no tenderness to other mens Consciences, when we are in place to Lord it over them. To Call any thing a Publick Grievance in Government, while our Rulers do it ; but to pretend, and plead Necessity for it, when the Power is got into our own hand.

For a *Jew*, to condemn a *Heathen*, that he robs God of his due Honour, by *Worship of Idols* : and yet not condemn his own Robbery, in committing *Sacrilege*, Rom. 2. 22. For *Christians* to cry out of the *Jews*, for distinguishing away the Commandments, and *making void*, as our Lord * says * Mat. 23. and shews they did in several instances, *the Law* & c. 23. of God through their *Traditions and Expositions* : and yet, to justify and cry up themselves, whilst, to all appearance, they seem to take the same Liberties, and are Doing the same things.

For

For any *Protestants*, to condemn the *Papists*, for *Depositing Heretical Princes*; and yet to be for *Depositing* their own, for his Zeal in a False Religion: To accuse them, for holding it lawful *to do evil that good may come*; and yet be ready to do the same themselves, when they think it necessary for the Church, or Nation: To blame their Liberties, in any Breach of Faith, Justice, or Charity towards Hereticks; and yet take Liberty, neither to keep Promise, nor do Justice, nor shew common Charity and Humanity, to men of those Opinions, which are most displeasing to themselves: To upbraid them, lastly, for thinking to excuse their False appearances in Word, or Practice, when that may save the things of this World, by *Equivocations*, and *Mental Reservations*, i. e. inward Reserves of intention, and limitations in their own minds, tho in their Practice they shew none, but appear the same as others; and yet, when they are brought in straight for their Consciences, to use like deceitful Artifices, and take the same Liberties to bring themselves off. This is saying and gain saying, as it serves our Turns, and Doing what we condemn in others; or, what is so like it, that the By-standers are not able to distinguish it: and making the same thing a Vice, when used in our Neighbours case; but a Virtue, when used in our own.

But now this Change of Doctrines, as we change Interests, or doing the very same, or like to what we Condemn, is apt mightily to reflect upon the Honour of Religion. As if its Principles stood not upon intrinsick Truth, but external Usefulness; as if we held things true, while we gain

gain by them, and they make for us; but begun to hold them False, confessing our eyes are open, and that we see the Error of them, when once we are brought to lose thereby, and they make against us. This is, as if gain were Godliness; and seems, as if what in these Tenets we seek to set up, were not the Honour of God, but the Interest of this World; not Truth, but our Selves. Which Reflections are such, that Religion cannot fall under a sorer Disgrace, or a more hurtful Prejudice. And therefore Spiritual Prudence, which professes to be wise for it, is especially careful, to Prevent such turns of Doctrine and Practice, according to the turn of worldly Interests, which would give men Ground or Occasion, to pass such Reflections on it.

'Tis true, good and wise men, may change their Opinions. And as they grow Older, Mortal and Fallible Understandings, may be allowed to grow wiser. And when we discover Errors, we must not after that obstinately adhere to them, because we have formerly believed, and professed them. Constancy in former Opinions, must not be obstinacy in former Errors: and when we Discover a New Truth, we must not Deny it, because we condemned it before; but be glad to profess it, now we see it, and sorry we saw it no sooner. Nay, if it happen to make for our interest, we are, for all that, to receive and profess it. For Truth is Truth, and will Challenge both our Belief and Profession, whether it make for us, or against us. Our Interest must not make us take Falshood for Truth; but wicah, it must not hinder us from owning, and embracing Truth it self for Truth. It would be a
strange

strange Return to a Profitable and advantageous Truth, to be Foes to it, because it is a Friend to us; and therefore to Deny it, because we are like to be the better by it. So that if it is a real Truth we Profess now, good and wise men must Profess it, tho they gain by it, and tho it be contrary to what they Professed formerly. And 'tis no Scandal to Religion, but the Command and Credit thereof, to have men thus exchange their Error for Truth; or that, which was not Religion, nor honourable to it, for that which really is.

But then this Change must be made upon manifest Appearance, and sufficient Evidence of Truth. 'Tis justifiable, and Honourable, when 'tis an Exchange for Truth, not for Interest. And therefore that which justifies it, must be the Evidence of Truth, being got by the Exchange: 'Tis the Suspicion of Interest, that occasions all the dishonourable Reflections, and the Demonstration of Truth must clear them. And therefore on such Changes, the Discoverers of the New Truths, must discover new Reasons, and produce better Proofs for them, than they had for their old Errors. They must bring new Arguments, which, whilst they were of a contrary Belief, were not urged to themselves. Or, carry the old ones further, than they had met them improved by others, and shew the weakness, of those Answers, they were wont to give to them; or of the Arguments they used to offer against that side, which they now take. And this, they are the more obliged to do, with clearness of Argument and Reason, in apparently advantageous Changes; because, in the Constant Sense and Experience of
the

the wise World, Interest is not held the best In-
lightner of our Minds. Its Power is not so much
to make us knowing, as willing; not so fit to car-
ry our Understandings before our Wills, as to
make our Wills out-run our Understandings: and
in the constant Experience of the World, both
formerly, and at this day, is much more success-
ful in making the Minds of men to miss of Truth,
than in carrying them to find it.

Wise Care therefore, for the Honour of God
and Religion, or Spiritual Prudence, requires that
we should not change our Doctrines on an appa-
rent Change of Interest, unless we make out be-
fore men, as plain an appearance of Truth in the
Exchange, as there is of Interest, that we may
not seem to hold it true, because it is for our In-
terest, or to be led more by Interest, than we
are by Truth.

And therefore, when once good men see their
Errors, it highly concerns both themselves and
Religion, instantly to renounce them, not for
Advantage, but for the Truths sake. And not
stay, till the Course of this World turns, and they
may hope to get as much by Disclaiming, as be-
fore they had by Professing them. For otherwise,
the World will be but too apt to judge them, not
Religious and Conscientious, but Secular and
Self-ended Penitents; who will never see, and re-
pent of their Errors and Evil-doings, whilst they
bring them in present Advantage. Oh, whom
Reasons of Truth and Duty, could never bring
to Repentance, till Reasons of fleshly Interest
struck in therewith; but who can readily repent
of any ways, as soon as once they turn to Loss,

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and

and they are evidently call'd to suffer for them.

And, on the other hand, we must be wary how we censure others, when we see them change from their former Judgments; and stay to hear their Reasons, before we presume to tax their Sincerity in the Exchange. When the Interest is apparent, the By-standers have an appearance of Interest at first sight; but have not the appearances for Truth, till the Person that made the Change, has opportunity to make known to them, how the new Truth appear'd to him. This indeed, is a Temptation, to those that take up with what comes next, and are confident of the Evidence of their own, and the little appearance on the other side, to be too often hasty, and hasty in their Censures. But one man must not be rash to judge of the Appearances of Truth to another, but wait to hear them from himself. And after he has heard them, not presently conclude, a way could not thereby appear true to him, because, on the same Evidence, it doth not, nor really ought to appear so to himself. That the thing is not true, he may safely say, not that the other could not think it so. For all mens Judgments are not equally wrought upon by the same things; and that may seem good Proof to some, which doth not so to others. So that, as to the Censure of particular Persons, especially whilst they keep true to their New Principles, not still, as necessity calls, out-running their own Pretences; it is good and safe ordinarily, to be slow in passing our Judgments, and leave them to their own Judge, who sees their Hearts, and to whom each of them stands or falls.

But

But in General, when the Arguments of Truth are not as apparent, as those of Interest in the Change; and the Parties, by all their Study, could never see the Truth pretended, whilst they were like to lose by it; but see it clearly, yea, and that, perhaps, without much Study, when once it makes for their Profit: the World is very suspicious, that 'tis Interest, more than Evidence, which opens their eyes, and a great Scandal comes upon Religion by such Changes. Such men are wont to preach up, say the World, what stands them in stead: not what they themselves really believe, and think. All colour whereof, St Paul was careful to remove from himself, when his Calumniation suggested this of him to the *Corinthians*. For, having professed his *Simplicity*, and godly *Sincerity*, without *fleshly wisdom*, more abundantly towards them: we write no other things unto you, saith he, than what you read or acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge, even to the end, 2 Cor. 1. 12, 13. That is, as *Theodoret* comments, *We do not preach one thing to you, and think another, as some endeavour to calumniate * us. For what I taught when present, I write now being absent, and hope I shall always be found preaching and saying the same to the end.*

* Quid enim vos præsens docui, ea & absens mitto, & in omne quod deinceps secuturum est tempore prædicaturum spero.
Theod. in loc.

But now opposite to this, is the way of worldly Wisdom. It is still for seeing Truth, in that which is advantageous and convenient for it. And willing to be beat out of any Duty or Doctrine, when it comes to lose by it. It first considers, the Gain, and Convenience, of a Cause. When it sees what makes most for that, it resolves that side is to be held, and then casts about, to find a Reason

or Pretence for it. And any thing is a good Reason for a Way to those, who before-hand are resolved to take it. It blames or commends, condemns or justifies, as a corrupt Party, not as an equal Judge. Self-Love steers all its Determinations. And following all its windings, it is never true to the Reality of the thing, but to its own Concern therein. Which, being differently affected by any ways, at different times, it accordingly either applauds, or decryes them, and has one Judgment of them, when they are in our own Case; and another, when they are in our Neighbours: Contrary to all good Reason, and true Wisdom, which, if it come from above, is without Partiality, and without Hypocrisie, as St. James says Ch. 3. 17. Which therefore, if obeyed and followed, would make us, as true and constant to all good things; so true and constant to our selves in loving, and commending them. Never to blame that in one, which we cry up in another. Never to acquit that in our selves, which we accuse in our Neighbours. And when we advance any Tenets as true; or any things as just, as reasonable, as religious; always to allow as much Truth to the Tenets, and as much Justice, Reason, and Religion to the Things, when they happen to serve our Brethrens Purpose, as we claimed to them before, when they served our selves.

5. A Fifth Rule of Christian Prudence for this Purpose, is not to be glad of any Temporal Advantage by ill things, and, whilst we reap the Profit, to be content with the wickedness. By the ill done, Religion suffers: tho' what is so ill and dishonourable for Religion, happen to be useful for our

Interest

Interest in this World, and make us Gainers. And if we can be content for our own Gain, to have it diminished, it shews we are not so much for it, as for our selves; but are Free to have it truck'd away, and given up for our own advantage. Spiritual Prudence therefore, which proposes the Honour and Interest of God and Religion, in the first place, and sets them before our selves; will not be bribed by any thing to enrich our selves by their Loss, or Glory in their Disgrace, or be pleased in what is to their Prejudice.

Indeed, if a Good thing is Done, tho with an ill mind, he that is wise for God and Religion, may rejoyce in it. As St Paul did, and declared he would Do, that Christ was Preach'd; tho they who preach'd him, did it not so much sincerely, to promote the Gospel; as Factionously, out of Envy and ill Will, to make themselves seem more considerable than he at *Philippi*, or to spight the Apostle, *Phil. 1. 15, 18*. 'Tis the thing that is Done, which in the eyes of men, doth Honour, or Dishonor to Religion. So that if a Good thing is Done, that doth Good to Religion, and may cause Joy to the Friends and Well-wishers of Religion: tho, if it be Done with an evil mind, it be ill for him that doth it, and so may cause Sorrow in behalf of the Person. But, when an ill thing is Done, that wounds Religion it self; and no man, who sets a just Price upon Religion, can think any worldly Gain, a sufficient Recompence for that. And therefore a Projector for Religion, or one who is Spiritually wise, can never, for any worldly Expedience, be content with ill things, or seem Glad of any wickedness.

Like to this, is another Point of Christian Prudence, *not to be all Zeal in matter of our own Rights, but all Indifference and Lukewarmness, in the Breach of God's Rights*: Nay, it may be, *not only content they should be broke by others; but to break his own selves, in the asserting of our own Rights*. Now this is Highly Dishonourable to God and Religion. This Different sense, of what concerns him and us, shews what things we are the most tender of. The quickness, and the vehemence of our Movings, in our own, and the coldness, and slowness of them, in his case; speaks plainly, how little we value him, and how much we value our selves. And therefore Christian Prudence, whose chief aim is to Do Honour to God and Religion, will make us more tender of his Rights than ours, and more careful of what makes for him, than of what makes for our selves. As *Moses*, who was so eminently Patient, and hard to be Provoked in his own Case; yet, when he saw the Dishonour of God in the *Golden Calf*, was so far moved therewith, that in a Transport of Zeal he broke the Tables, for which he had waited Fasting in the *Hore Mount* for forty days, Deut. 9. 9, 11, 17.

But now these are quite otherwise in the way of Worldly Prudence. Worldly things stand highest in the accounts of worldly wise; and therefore they are more affected with what touches them, than with any thing else. To smite them there, is to wound them in their most sensible Parts, and to touch the very Apple of their Eyes; it gives them the quickest Sense, and creates the highest Passion in them. But what doth Preserve these, Preserve what they esteem of most Worth; and so may recompense

compense and over-balance any other Losses. Tho Religion suffer in some Point, they are not so sensible of that. And so long as they have no hand in making it suffer, they can be well enough content to see it, and leave others to be sorry for their wickedness, who bring ill to it. And if its Loss makes for their Temporal Profit and Advantage, they think they are very well paid for it, and can be Glad thereof. Self-Love sways Fleshly Prudence. And that always finds itself in our own Advantage, and takes that to rejoyce in for its share; leaving others to look to themselves, as it doth, and to mourn for the Prejudice it doth them, or for the ill they have Done therein.

C H A P. III.

Christian Prudence for Pleasing God, and a Good Conscience. And against Popularity.

A Fifth End is, to please God. This will take us off from Popularity. And to please our own Good Conscience. Of the contrary Ways of worldly Wisdom. Greatness of Numbers should not Draw to any thing, nor want of Number Drive from a Good One.

5. Fifthly and lastly, a fifth End, which Religious Prudence proposes to it self, is to please God, and a Good Conscience, by Doing things in themselves Good and Virtuous. Religion is not for Shows, but Realities: and God is for Truth, not Appearances. And therefore Spiritual Prudence, which aims to be wise for Religion, and for God, is for securing those solid and substantial Goods, or those

things Good in themselves, which Religion prescribes, and God approves: not what passes for Good in the mistake of the World, or in mens diseased Apprehensions

These Good things it doth, *that it may please God*. His Will is the Cause and Rule of Duty, and Goodness; and his Approbation is the recompence thereof. To Do what is Good, for other Ends and Considerations, may be Fleishly Design, or Human Discretion; but to Do it, that we may thereby please God, is Religion and Spiritual Wisdom. The Great aim Religious men have in all these things, is that God accept them. And they have enough, when he accepts a Service, tho here it meets with nothing but Persecutions, instead of Recompences. To be able to keep up with this, and think pleasing God enough, whoever else be Displeased at us, is to act like our Fore-runners in the Faith, who did all things *to be accepted with him*, 2 Cor. 5. 9. *to be praised and commended by him*, or have him approve them, 2 Cor. 10. 18. Rom. 2. 29. *to have our Eye single*, or that Purity and Sincerity of intentions, which must make *the whole Body full of Light*, or carry us to a Discharge of Duty in the whole Compass of Conversation, as our Saviour says, Mat. 6. 22.

This thinking is enough for our Practice thereof, that any way will please God, tho 'tis most Displeasing, and utterly Decryed by men: will take us from *Popularity*, or *steering our selves by Publick Fame*, and *the Applause of men*. And this is absolutely necessary, and one of the things to be first laid, in the way of Religious Wisdom. He that enters in that way, must fix this as a Rule, not to

Do

Do what men will commend, but what really Deserves to be Commended. To please them, that will be pleased with their Duty, and with his Doing of his Duty; but to please God, and a Good Conscience, tho' for that all the World should be Displeased with him. Had men stood in the state of Innocence, we might safely have governed our selves by their Pleasure and Applause, because then they would only have applauded Good things. But since all are fallen from that, as the World now is, they are Generally most pleas'd with what most offends God, and cry up ill ones. They commend things, not for intrinsic Worth and Goodness, but for their Usefulness and Expedience, in serving Ends and Purposes. Or, for their Suitableness, not to pure Reason and Innocence, but to impure and corrupt Nature, and Fleshly Appetite. So that, as the Case now stands, if we will have their Applause, we must ordinarily want the Applause of God, and of a Good Conscience.

This being the state of all Times, always rendered Popularity, or a Resolution to do or omit, what would Prevent offence, and Please the People, inconsistent with Duty and true Goodness. *How can ye believe,* says our Savior, *and 'tis the same Case with all other discountenanced and exploded Duties, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour, which comes from God only,* Joh. 5. 44. *The chief Rulers,* even when convinced in their Consciences, would not confess Christ, *because they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God,* Joh. 12. 42, 43. And, *if I yet pleased men,* saith St. Paul, *I should not be the Servant of Christ,* Gal. 1. 10.

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He that will be Good therefore, and truly wise for God, must arm against Censure, and be content, as Christ, and his Apostles, and the best men in all times were, to hear himself call'd by hard Names, and pass *through good and ill Report*, 2 Cor. 6. 8. Nay, in trying Times, especially if his Station is any ways publick, it is scarce possible to avoid it; but in seeking to shun, he would, tho in a less measure, run upon it. For whilst, for striking in with the Crowd, he is cryed up by those, who are in the Wrong: he must expect to be cryed down by those who are in the Right; whose applause tho it makes less Noise, yet ought to be of more Moment. We must not be dismay'd then, because the World is against a thing; but because there is just Reason for it to be so. We must not begin it because it is commended: nor give over a Duty or Good thing, because it is decryed. We must resolve to look, what pleases God, not what will please the Multitude: and then we are wise for God, not foolish for the Company of Simple men, and like to do what we ought to do.

Next to this of Pleasing God, is *Pleasing the own Good Conscience*. And this is subordinate to the former, and a Consequent thereof; since we can never in Conscience be pleased with our Selves but when we think God is pleased with us. This is a most wise End, and of mighty importance, to be satisfied with our selves. Without this, we can have no Happiness. If we are discontented in our minds, whatever is without us, can never please us. Nothing makes us happy, further than we are pleas'd with it: and we can have no true Relish of Pleasure in other Things, whilst we are uneasie

uneasie and displeased with our selves. Better all the World should be angry with us, than God and our own Conscience. So that the Wildom, which would secure the Power and Honour, and afford us the Comfort and Pleasure of Religion, must always propose to it self the Doing what will Please God, and thereby our own Consciences.

And whether or no we have Done, what we know is pleasing to him, Spiritual Prudence sends us to learn, *not from others, but from within our selves: This is our rejoycing*, says S. Paul, the testimony of our Conscience, *that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And this is the great happiness of all upright Walkers, that all their Comforts are from a Witness within themselves. *If our own Heart Condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. Our own heart, is near us: So that at any time, when we please, we may ask it the Question. It is Privy to all our Actings: So that whensoever we enquire, it can answer us. And we are as privy to its Answers: So that we need not go to learn of any, what return is made to us. Such is the Advantage, of having this to learn, from the Testimony of our own Hearts and Consciences. And to their Testimony, God, and Spiritual Wisdom, send us in this case. For, when the Question is about our own Actings, *the Things of a Man*, as the Scripture says, *are best known to the Spirit of the Man himself*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. Tho we Do not know so much of others: Yet, under God, we are all able to tell the most of our selves, and no one else can say so much as our own Bosoms.

So

So that we must not fetch our Rejoycing from the Censures and Commendations of others; nor be Chearful or Dejected, according as they surmise or think of us: But according as we know by our own selves. It may be they are rash and unjust in their Censures, and judge us unheard; as, indeed, they are oft aptest to condemn us, who know least of us. But if all the while, our own Conscience can testifie 'tis otherwise; we may say with *S. Paul*, *'tis a very small thing with me, that I should be judged of you, or of mans judgment*, 1 Cor. 4. 3. If all the World speaks well, what is that, if we are accused in our own Consciences? And if we are acquitted there, that is worth *ten thousand Witnesses*, and what signifie all their Accusations? Let us take care therefore to Live so, as that we may be well Reported of in our own Breasts; and we need not look out for Comforts, from the Opinions and Reports of others. To know what is in us, for our Joy or Sorrow, we must not take our Account from Strangers, we are best known to our own selves.

But now, quite contrary to all this, is the way of *Fleshly Wisdom*. Its care and aim is, not how to please God, but how to come off among men. It is more concerned, for what is like to anger and offend them, than for what will offend him. As the *Chief Rulers*, who, *believing in Christ*, knew to own him was most pleasing to God: But yet *did not confess him*, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue, Jo. 12. 42. It is for suiting its Carriage, not to the Reality of things, but to their Diseased Opinions. Its Maxim, is not to side with the Truth, but to swim with the Stream. It is for Doing what is in vogue,

vogue, and seeming to approve what is by most applauded, whether it be good or bad. It will assert an ill Cause, when the Multitude are for it; and desert a good Cause, when 'tis generally decried. It will renounce any Duty, or Virtue, when 'tis exploded: Strike in with the Oppressors of much envied and hated Persons, when they are trampled under foot; tho it happens to know they are innocent, or knows not that they are in fault, or however faulty they are in other things, tho it believes they are greatly wronged in the present Case, and suffer against Justice; it will always run along with all the Violences of the time: And that, as seeking, not what is really good, but what other men think and call so; nor, as studying to please God, but to Live at quiet, and please the World, steering all its Course, not by Truth and Virtue, which are a certain fix'd thing, always one and the same; but by the uncertain Blast of Popularity, or vulgar Opinion.

Agreeable to this, we may observe it is the Rule of worldly wise men, *to stand for Virtue and Duty, not when it has few Friends, and they must practise it alone; but when they have Company enough, to back and stand by them.* They are for Truth and Goodness, when they have the strongest Parties, and the Cry of a Crowd, to approve and justify them in that Cause: But not when the Cry goes against them, and they see no Numbers to joyn with. So that 'tis not Spiritual Truth and Goodness, but Worldly Strength and Number, which is highest in their Opinion, and takes most with them.

We may likewise observe, from the same influence and interposition of Fleshly Wisdom, even
among

among well-disposed Men, the great Difference between Suffering Duties, when cryed up, and the same when decryed by the Multitude. Men find it much easier, to suffer for a good thing, when the Show of the People is for them; but very hard, when it runs all against them. Nay, there is a Terror in the Clamor of Rabbles, which frights many, that dare even stand the face of Regular Justice. Fleshly Wisdom, looks out still for some visible Support, and a fleshly Arm; which when it cannot have from Authority, and the Higher Powers, it would fain have from the Number of Partakers. Where it has inclination, it needs moreover to be heartened, and commended in a good thing. It is not mortified enough, to the Countenance and Cry of Men: Looking too much without it felt to their Applauses; and too little within, to the Commendations of God and a Good Conscience.

Whereas, by all the Rules of God, and true Wisdom, if a way is bad, no Authority of Numbers, or Press of the Multitude, must bear us along with it. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,* saith the Law, *Exod. 23. 2.* If sinners entice thee, whether more or fewer, whether a Sinful Man or a Sinful Nation, *consent thou not,* saith Wisdom, *Prov. 1. 10.* When ill Men list themselves in Numbers, and Combine in Errors or ill things, they are ungodly Conspiracies; and all that Love God, or themselves, must take care not to be drawn in, or go along with them. *Say not ye a Confederacy to all them, to whom this people shall say a Confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear,* *Is. 8. 12, 13.* Thus, must not we run in with their wrong

wrong Opinion, or fear what affrights them; but instead thereof, what will offend him. When the World is bent upon ill things, as it ordinarily is, Good Christians must not think it will excuse them, to say they were born away in the same with the Torrent. But they must remember, that in their Baptism, they renounced the World; that Christ, who he found his Followers in the World, yet has called or chosen them out of, or from among the World, John 15. 19. and that they must not be conformed to this World, but transformed into a quite different Stamp, by the Renewal of their Mind, Rom. 12. 2.

And on the contrary, if a way or thing is truly Virtuous and Good, no smallness of Numbers on its side, or scarcity of Adherents, can warrant us to forsake it. Our owning it at such times, instead of being excused, is more highly requisite, and most of all needed. For then, under all the Attacks of its Enemies, it is to be supported by its Followers, and can worst Dispense with their Service. It is then in want of Adherents, and so can least of all spare us. It is then like to be left Destitute, and without help in its greatest need: which, instead of Releasing any, must incite every one, who would approve himself its true Friend, a Friend being born for Adversity, instead of flinching from, to appear for it, and put to his helping hand.

And accordingly the best Persons, have not Cowardly flunk away, but Courageously stuck to God and their Duty, when they had the least Company, and were left to own and stand to it by themselves. When *Jesus Christ*, that absolute Patron

Patron and Advocate for Virtue, appeared in the World: He was *enquireur d'armes*, a Sign spoken against, Luc. 2. 34. When the Apostles after him came to embarque in its Cause and Interest, they were a *Sect* every where decry'd, Acts 28. 2. the whole World in a manner stood at gaze, and they were made a *gazing-stock* to the World, by Reproaches and Afflictions, Heb. 10. 33. being made a *Spectacle*

* *Staley.* or * Theatrical Show, to the World, to Angels, and to men, 1 Cor. 4. 9. Confessing the Truth bravely and undauntedly, as did all the Primitive Saints under all the Discouraging Crys and Persecutions of Popular † Tumults and Uproars, as well as of Courts and Judicatures. Noah was a Pattern, and Preacher of Righteousness to the old World, when the whole Earth had corrupted themselves, with one Voice Decrying his Virtue, and Deriding his Preaching and Provision of the Ark, and were full ripe for Ruin by the Flood, Gen. 7. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 4. Elias, was true to God and Religion, and jealous for them, when he had none visibly to side with him, and take his part, all the Prophets, as he complains to God, *being slain with the Sword; and I, even I only am left, and they seek my Life to take away*, 1 Kings 19. 10. Jeremy asserted the Truth and way of God, when he alone was to be a Defenced City, and a Brzen Wall, against the whole Land, Jerem. 1. 18. when he was a Derision to all his People, and their Song all the day, Lam. 3. 14.

In the great Article, of the Divinity of our Lord, S. Athanasius was almost left by himself, and there was, as it was said, *Athanasius contra Mundum*, or Athanasius on one side, and the whole World on the other.

other. And to those who then objected the † *Paucity of its Numbers*, and measured the Authority of a Doctrine by the multitude of Applauders; he suggests, that Christ chose twelve Apostles, and armed these twelve, who were all simple, illiterate, and poor Men, with Truth against the whole World, who, tho so many more in Number, were yet all in the wrong. And these twelve, were not to follow ten Thousand: But the ten Thousand were to Compose themselves to the Way and Belief of these Twelve. Who, as he goes on, when St. Stephen stood alone, Derided by all, and Stoned to Death, would not rather have been on the Side of this single oppressed Man, than of the Numerous and Persecuting Vulgar? Or, on Phineas's, who went out alone for God among the Jews? Or, on Noah's, to have been saved with those few Souls in the Ark, when the universal World were destroyed by a Deluge? 'Tis Good, 'tis Good, for a just Man, tho he be but one, and stands alone, to shew a Confessorian Liberty, and Profess the Truth boldly and freely, and this way to break the Power of Error and Wickedness, tho standing on the united Votes, and concurrent agreement and approbation of the Multitude. And as for the Weight of Numbers, a Multitude without Demonstration, Proceeding only by Will, is fit to imprint Fear, not to persuade Belief. Tho some Multitudes I also Reverence, viz. that which corrects Fatherlike, and gives Demonstration, and keeps to the old Way, not rejoicing in Innovation. Not that Multitude, which is hired by Gifts and Flatteries, or hurried aside by Ignorance and Unskilfulness, or which is lapsed by Fear and Terror, or that prefers a Momentary Enjoyment of Sin to eternal Life, * says that Good Father,

† Non dubitandum est paucos Episcopos esse pretiosos de merito Confessionis & inviolabilis fidei, multos vero nulli fieri merito hærescos vel prævaricationis, quia in causa veri, maxime in causa Religio- nis & sacrae Fidei, non numerus numero comparandus est, sed pura illa Apostolica fides, probata exiliis, probata cruciatibus, licet unius, multorum infidelitibus præponenda est.

Augustin. & Marcell. in Lib. Precum, p. 13. * Tom. Op. 1. p. 293, 294.

to those who took the judgment of the Multitude, for Proof and Evidence of Truth.

Thus has it been the care of Good Men in all times, and must be ours when God shall call us to the Tryal, if we will be their true followers, to stick firmly to their Duty, whether with, or without Company. They were resolved to adhere to it, tho' all the World did Desert it. They had Determined beforehand, to sacrifice every other Interest to that, and to stand or fall with it. And therefore, wheresoever it called, they readily followed: not considering, whether it were with the Cry, or against it; whether any body else went along to back them, or all stay'd behind. What the Poet said, in the Character of the Good and Upright Man; that neither the Madness and Heat of the Rabble, calling for an ill thing; nor the Face of a Tyrant Menacing and Commanding it, can shake his virtuous Steadfastness: is a Pitch, that, whilst others content themselves to talk of, they still made visible in their Practice.

† Non ardor Civium prava juben-
tium, non vultus instantis tyrannimen-
te quatit solida.

Horat.

Carmin. l. 3.
Od. 3.

I add in the last place, concerning all the foregoing Ends of Christian Prudence, that tho' being Flesh as well as Spirit, we are allowed to have other lower Ends: yet is it one of its Rules, when we cannot serve both, to give up the inferior, to serve the main End. It will part with our Worldly Goods and Convenience, to preserve all the foregoing Ends of Duty and Innocence, of the Honour of Religion, and a good Conscience; and forego any Good of our Bodies for the Greater Good of our Souls. This is implied, when this Prudence is recommended and required by our Lord under the Name of the wisdom of the Serpent.

Mat.

Ch. IV. *Of not doing Evil, that Good may come.*

67

Mat. 10. 16. For his chiefeſt care, as has been commonly noted, is to ſave his Head. And as the Serpent, ſays S.^r Chryſoſtom, upon the Place, gives away all firſt, tho it be his Body it ſelf to be Cut in pieces, that he may thereby Preſerve his Head ſafe: in like manner, ſays our Lord, be thou ready to Surrender up all things, tha all thy Poſſeſſions, tho thy Body, yea, tho thy Life it ſelf, to preſerve thy Faith. For that is the Head, and Root of all. And ſo long as that is kept, tho thou loſeſt all the reſt, yet ſhalt thou recover all again with Greater Magnificence at laſt. — Requiring thee, to ſhew the Wiſdom of the Serpent, he warns thee not to loſe what is of moſt account, and when a Blow doth come, never to receive it in a Principal, or moſt Viſal Part. And this is a Rule of Worldly Wiſdom too, to give up what is of leſs account, for the Preſervation of what is of more. But its Fault here is, to ſubject Spiritual to Temporal Ends, as may be ſeen in all the Preceding Inſtances thereof, which, in all Right and Reaſon, ought to be ſet above them.

* Homil.
34 in Mat.

CHAP. IV.

Of not Doing Evil, that Good may come.

AS Chriſtian Prudence, is in the firſt place to fix the Mark whereat we are to aim, and to ſee, and ſet out to us, *Right Ends*: So is it

2. Secondly, to purſue thoſe Ends, only by ſit and Chriſtian Ways. Prudence, is moſt taken up in Choice of Means; appearing either in *Sagacity* and *Acutenesſ*, by Diſcerning them inſtantly; or in

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Counſel,

Counsel, when it Discovers them by Thought and Study.

And opposite to this, is *Imprudence*, which has no Due Understanding or Consideration, about Ways and Methods; and doth not either see, or stick to those Means which are fittest for the End it aims at. Sometimes it misses them, *through inordinate Haste*, not staying to take Counsel, or Deliberate which Course is best. As it happens, when Men are push'd on rashly by their own Will or Passion; not taking time and pains, first to reflect with themselves, and call to mind former Experience and past Success of the same Course, or view present things and Circumstances, or consider what may be the Effects and Consequences, or Reason and Compare one thing with another, or, where there is need thereof, shew Docility and Regard to other Mens Skill, hearkening to a good and wise Adviser: These, and such like, are the orderly and intermediate Steps, whereby the Mind should proceed from Proposal of a thing to pursuit thereof, and Guide it self as need requires, in consulting about the Fitness of Ways and Methods. And, when without such orderly Process, in a Case that needs it; it fixes on a wrong way in haste, at the impulse of its own Will or Humor, or of some external impellent, without having taken Counsel about it: This *uncounsel'd Choice*, or *inordinate haste in fixing*, is call'd *Precipitancy*. And this, where it is not only a *blind Festination*, but bears with it a *plain Contempt of known Laws and Rules*, which should have kept it in, or such an *headstrong Motion*, as is a clear Effect of Pride and Presumption; is call'd *Temerity*. At other times,

times, when it stays to Consult about them, *Imprudence* misses the right Way and Means, by not viewing sufficiently, but *Contemning* or *Neglecting* the *Circumstances* of things; especially those that are necessary to form a Right Judgment of them: Which act of Imprudence, is called *Inconsiderateness*. Or, lastly, when it has done all in point of Deliberation, a *third* Act of Imprudence about the means, is *not to stick to what has been once Resolved upon*, or *be steadfast in Right Purposes*; which is *Inconstancy*. *Precipitancy*, is a Fault and Defect in Consultation; *Inconsiderateness* in Judging, and *Inconstancy* in point of *Persisting*, or *Sticking to what had been well fixed or judged before*.

Now, as Prudence is thus taken up in Choice and Use of means, so is *Christian Prudence* in the Choice and Use of such only, *as are fit for Christians*. As *Prudence*, it must Direct to *fitting Means*. And as *Christian*, to such as are agreeable to the *holy Religion and Laws of Christ Jesus*.

One part of this, and that of Great Wideness and Importance, is to see what Ways and Means are fittest for the Attainment or Encrease of all particular Virtues. All Duties have their proper Means, which make way for their Performance, and Hindrances, that do obstruct it. And 'tis the Part of Prudence, in one that would be wise to Do his Duty, to Discern and Direct what these Means are, in the Case of each; that seeking them always in wise and right ways, he may labor after them with the more Success. To shew what these are, through all particular Virtues, what Means are best accommodate to their several Natures, or to our Needs and Temptations in the Ex-

ercise or Discharge thereof, is besides my present purpose, and may be learned, as occasion requires from those good Books, where the Duties themselves are Practically and Particularly treated of.

But, besides this seeing what Means are fittest for the Discharge of any Duties: Another part of Prudence is, to see, in such Discharge, what ways are fittest for us, or our own outward Encouragement; or that we may Do it with most Ease, Convenience, and Safety to our selves. This Prudence looks at, in all our Ways; whether the Discharge of Duty, or any others that are free, are left to our selves. And this Prudence Christianity must moderate, that our Care for our Safety never carry us against, or make us careless of our Duty. And upon both these, *viz. The ways of Securing both Religion and our selves*, I shall observe several Limitations, which, in regard to the Nature and Rules of Christianity, Spiritual Prudence lays on us, whilst a Latitude is given therein by Fleshly Wisdom, and taken by the worldly Wise.

I. In the first place then, I observe of Spiritual Wisdom, that it is never for doing Evil, that Good may come.

This Good is any Fleshly Convenience or Benefit of this World, that concerns us, either as Men or Christians. And this, whose worldly Convenience soever it serves, whether our own or our Friends and Relations; whether of few or many; private or publick; of Religion or Civil Government; Church or State. These things are the main Care of the Wisdom of the Flesh; and the great Mark which the Prudence of this World drives at. And Spiritual Prudence allows the seek-

ing

ing thereof, so long as it is without Sin; but it gives no leave to Do ill, *i. e.* to omit any Duty, or transgress any Commandment for them. I speak of Commandments, that require things of a Natural or Moral Obligation. In mere Positives, as Circumcision, Shew-Bread, and the Sabbatick-Best; God sometimes allows more Liberty, in case of Necessity or Great Convenience: As the Omission of Circumcision, was Conniv'd at for the extream Burdensomness thereof, whilst they were in a Travelling State in the Wilderness. But Natural or Moral Obligations, are not to give way to any outward Convenience. In case of these, Spiritual Prudence is not for Doing a Spiritual Ill, for any Worldly Good: It will rather suffer any Ill, than Do it. It gets by the Ill it suffers, if it can suffer with Patience and Innocence. But it always loses by the Ill it doth. Tho it get a worldly Convenience, it parts with what is incomparably better, its Integrity, and a good Conscience. It will never yield to commit a Sin, no not for the Worldly Convenience of the things of God and Religion; not owning that corrupt and ungodly Maxim; of *breaking Religion to preserve Religion. Be wise as Serpents, but simple and innocent as Doves,* saith our Saviour, *Mat. 10. 16.* That is, says an old and learned Comment, *to speak in a word, be wise as Serpents, that you may understand, and shun what is ill: But be simple as Doves, that you may not Do any thing that is ill.*

* Incer-
t Authoris
in Mat. ap.
Chrysoft.

It may seem needless, perhaps, to prove this to be a Rule and Precept of true Spiritual Wildom to Christians; or, indeed, to any Persons of Natural Honesty, and good Moral Tempers. But yet

we see by sad Experience, when they are brought to the Pinch, and cannot have the Good they seek without Doing Ill for it: That not only Christians, but Christians of all Persuasions, are ready to think and profess 'tis otherwise. This is the General Effect of the VVifdom of the Flesh, and in their Necessities, offers it self, and too oft, God knows, with over-much Success to all that have Fleshly Natures, and is not confin'd to any Sects or Parties. They that will blame it when they do not need it, and cry out of it in others, are ready, alas! most shamefully many times to justify it in their need, and practise by it themselves. But when they do thus, it is only at the Incitation of Fleshly Willdom; of that *mauvaise*, or *Craftiness* that makes use of any thing which will help on a Design, and which the Scripture notes and taxes in VVorldly wise Men, *Eph. 4. 14.* *I Cor. 3. 19.* But is what Religion and Christian Prudence, which contrives more for God and Goodness, than for VVorldly Convenience, will never allow of.

1. This Doing a Spiritual Ill, that a VVorldly Good or Convenience may come thereby, is not to be justified,

I. *First*, by any Pretence of Serviceableness, or Ends of Piety towards God. VVe must never Sin for him, or Transgress his Laws to please, or do him Service. He has no need of our Sins; for 'tis only human Impotence, which has no place in him, that is the Parent of, and puts upon all unlawful Expedients. And he will never accept or be served by them. For our Service is not so much to Do him Good, who being all Fullness, and perfectly happy in himself, stands in no need of any

any thing from us : as to shew our Obedience. And if the acceptance of all our Services, lies in our Obedience ; we cannot think he will ever count himself seryed, by seeing his Laws broken, and himself therein disobey'd. When Saul spared the Fat things, *the best of the Sheep, and Oxen of the Amalekites* : it was, indeed, a Breach of Duty, God having * expressly commanded him to *destroy v. 2, 3. all, and spare none* ; but it was upon a Pretence of Piety. They were spared, as he pleads for himself, only for a Sacrifice, which he thought was more for God's Glory and Service, 1 Sam. 15, 15. But what says God to Saul's committing this ill to do good to him, or sinning for his Glory and Interest ? *Hasb the Lord as great delight in Sacrifice and Burnt-offerings, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, i. e. than to yield to an Act of Disobedience, that we may have a Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams, v. 2 2.*

When well-meaning Uzzab, put forth his hand to the Ark of God, and took hold of it to bear it up, when the Oxen shook it, and it tottered in the Cart : he did ill, 'tis true, for he touch'd it with a forbidden hand ; God having order'd, on any Carriage of the Sanctuary, and of the Ark, that no unhallowed hand of those that bare it, should touch any holy thing, lest they dye, Num. 4. 5, 15. But this ill thing he did, in an apparent danger, and with a most visible appearance of Good to come to the Things of God thereby. What, might Uzzab think, may not I, especially in a seeming little thing, transgress one Precept, when there is an apparent necessity for it, to save even the Ark of God,

|| Psal. 78.
61. &
132. 8.

God, that Glory and Strength of Israel, as || 'tis called, or to keep and Preserve a Church already tottering, from tumbling to the Ground? But how doth God receive this unlawful, indeed, but well meant Course, of committing a seemingly little Sin to save the things of his own House, which he himself had made of highest Dignity and Importance? *The Anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzab, and God smote him there for his error, and there he Dyed by the Ark of God, 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.*

If God would accept of Wickedness for any Ends, certainly it must be for his own Glory, which is worth all the World besides; and which has some Plea of Compensating him for the Disobedience, and making him a Gainer by the Exchange. And if he would allow of any Sin for his Glory; one would think it should be an officious Lye: when his Servants and Well-wishers, think, and stretch beyond the Truth, or traduce the opposite Parties, especially where they have some Plausible Colour in Pressing Consequences, merely because they think his Honour needs it, and they know not how they can otherwise well defend his Cause. But yet God will not accept of any Service, by any such Sin, or Breach of Duty, as this.

For, what says the Scripture, to *Job's Friends*? *Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his Person in judging, as you do between him and me, when he requires in Judgment to accept no Person? Job 13. 7, 8.* But now, all the Unrighteousness, or ill they did against *Job*, was only thereby to clear God's Honour

hour and Justice in *Job's* Sufferings. They were Forgers of Lyes against the innocent, as he tells them, v. 4. but all with a design to justify the Proceedings of God. *Eliphaz* accuses him, that he had plowed iniquity, and sowed wickedness, and now reaped the same, *Job* 4. 8. But this was, to make God juster than *Job*, in his Sufferings, v. 7. 17, 18. *Bildad* tells him, that his Children were wicked, and he himself an hypocrite, *Ch.* 8. 4, 6, 13. But this he said, lest else in his Case, God should appear to pervert Justice and Judgment, v. 3. *Zophar* charges him, that he had been wicked, and that iniquity was still in his Tabernacles, *Ch.* 11. 3. 6, 14. But the design hereof, was to justify God's dealings, and to shew he exacted of him, less, than *Job's* iniquity deserved, v. 6. All these ill things, which *Job's* Friends did, were well meant: their hard Judgments against *Job*, were only the effect of their Respecting the Person of God, and taking his Part. This is *Job's* own Construction of them: Will ye, says he, accept his Person? *Ch.* 13. 8. Their unjust Surmises and Accusations, were only pious Falshoods; God's Proceedings needing them, as they conceived. And yet for all the ill was done with so pious an intention, will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Was a Report unanswerable, when *Job* objected it against them, *Ch.* 13. 7.

God will never allow his Servants to go out of his own way, tho it be on Pretence to serve himself. He will never think, and we must never say, he is glorified, when he is disobeyed; or that he can ever get any Glory, by our Transgressing of our Duty. We glorifie his Power and Sovereignty,

verignty, when we obey it; his Wisdom, when we follow it; and Religion, when we keep and practise the Rules thereof. We glorifie him, as I formerly observed, by shewing forth his Glorious Attributes, and expressing them in our Selves. Whereas all Sin, is never the expression, but always the defacement of his Image; and therefore his Glory can only be sought, as 'tis only compassed, by Obedience.

2. Nor is it to be justified, by any Pretence to serve the Publick. However the Good of the Publick, is of more account, than any Private Good; yet is it of less, than the Honour and Interest of Almighty God. And therefore, if we may not be allow'd to sin, to serve God; we can never be allow'd to do more for the Service of any other Master, or sin to serve the Publick. This, indeed, is a specious Cover for unlawful Expedients, and nothing is more ordinarily pretended by those that use them, for their own Defence. For this is the way to make all People Parties, to stop their mouths from branding it with just Censures, nay, to bribe their Favour and Approbation of the Expedient, to perswade the Publick it is made use of only for their sakes.

But this will never pass, before an impartial and most just God; however it may stop the mouths, of Partial, and Corrupt men. This Pretence the Jews had, in the Murder committed upon our Blessed Saviour. *If we let this man alone, say the Pharisees at their Council held about him, all men will run after him, and the Romans will come, and take away both our Place and Nation, Joh. 11.48. 'Tis expedient, said the High Priest Caiphas, for us, that*

one man should dye for the People, and that the whole Nation perish not, v. 50. But yet for all this Pretence, and Warranty of publick Expedience, this was a Murder acted by most wicked hands, Acts 2. 23. The Publick must be sought under God, not set up against him; and it, as well as private Persons, must rule it self by ways of Righteousness, not by ways of mere Expedience.

Indeed, nothing is so true, and serviceable an Expedient for the Publick, as an intire Practice of Religion, or Performance of Duty and Pleasing God. This is the best Bottom, and firmest Security, of Common Good, or Publick Interest. 'Tis not thought so; I confess, by worldly men, who look only at sensible and present things. But it will appear so to all raised and Spiritual Minds, who know God has the most to do, or the greatest hand in bringing any Events about, and rely on Providence. For to be sure, they that rest on Providence, more than on Humane Provisions and Appearances, will never think they can serve the Publick Interest by Disobedience. *Fiat Justitia, ruat Cælum*, is their Maxim. To do their Duty, is their Care: to govern the World, and see this do no hurt, is God's. And when they have done their Duty, which is their Part; they can chearfully trust, and rely on him, for Events.

3. Nor by any Pretence, to serve our Friends or Relations; nay, or to serve our selves, or our own Lives. If an unlawful Expedient may not be taken to serve God, to be sure it may not be taken to serve us: for his interest is infinitely of more account than ours; and he is not so like to dispense with the Breach of any of his own Laws, for us,

as for himself. If it may not be done for the Publick, sure it must not for any Private account: for the Publick Good contains that of Private Persons, and is worth more to God, than any Private is.

Indeed, if Self-Love may be Judge, we might soonest take these Liberties in our own Case, and stretch furthest to serve our selves. But Self-Love and Religion, are two things: and as the Great Rule of that, is *Self-pleasing*; so the Fundamental Principle of this, is *Denying of our selves*. 'Tis always without Exception, for Denying of our Sins, and not doing the least ill, to get out of the greatest Distress. *Thou my Soul is continually in my hand*, says the Psalmist, yet do I not forget the

Law. * *The wicked have laid a snare for me*: yet I erred not from thy Precepts, Psal. 119. 109, 110. *They had almost consumed me upon Earth, but I forgot not thy Precepts*, v. 87. When there is no way to escape the Cross, but a Sin; Religion is for taking up the Cross, not for escaping it. Thou may Love our Selves, and Love our Friends, and seek what is pleasing both to them and us: yet must that be under God, not against him; and we must prefer our Duty, and pleasing him, before both. *If any man love Father, or Mother, or any thing else, yea his own Life above me*, says our Saviour, *he is not worthy of me*, Mat. 10. 27. Luk. 14. 26. And when St. Peter in this way of Selfish Expedience, out of pure humane Love and Friendship, fell to dissuade Christ, from that last and hardest part of Obedience, in his Sufferings; *Get thee behind me, Satan*, says he to him, Mat. 16. 22, 23. Such Counsels never come from God,

* See Psal.
44. 17, 18,
19, 22. &
Psal. 119.
51.

nor are accepted with him ; but always have Satan and Selfish Natures at the Bottom, and are pleasing to them alone.

Thus, upon *no Pretence of Good to come*, may we ever break a Commandment, or venture on an evil Action. Expediency or Serviceableness, tho' to the best Purposes, will never hallow an unholy, or justify an unlawful Thing. When we are proposing any Good, we must take a good way to it : Good Ends must be compassed by good Means and Methods. To make a good Action, we must not only do what is good, but do it with a good Design. For *Bonum*, as the Rule says, *est ex integra Causa*, taking in the Goodness, both of the Act, and of the Intention. But to render, what we do, an ill Action ; 'tis enough if we either do an ill thing, tho' with the best Design ; or a good thing, if we do it with an ill one. For *Malum*, as the Rule of Morals says, *est ex quolibet Defectu*, and will come in, either by the illness of the thing, or by the illness of the intention. An ill thing, is still an ill thing, tho' men do it with the best intention : and the Actors are punishable in Religion, for the illness of the Action ; not justifiable, for the Goodness of the intention. Some, indeed, once laid this to St. Paul's Charge, as if he taught them to do ill with a good intention, or *to do evil that good may come*, Rom. 3. 8. But this, says the Apostle, was a *scandalous Report* ; and the Doctrine, was a Doctrine for loose Libertines, not for holy Christians, such as he did by no means own, but abhor and throw out with indignation. *Some scandalously report that we say, let us do evil that good may come,*

come, whose Damnation is just, Rom. 3. 8. *As God hath commanded no man to do wickedly: So, be the Pretence what it will, neither hath he, as the wise Son of Sirach says, given any man licence in sin, Eccles. 15. 20.*

CHAP. V.

Of the Plea of Necessity, Providence, or Prophecies, for Doing ill.

HAVING said thus much, to shew in general how inviolable a Rule of Christian Wisdom this is, *not to do evil that good may come.* I shall from hence observe the vanity of some Palliations, whereby men fruitlessly endeavour to blanch over the Deformity of this Practice, such as the *Plea of Necessity, Providence, or Prophecies.* And after that, to tax and set off some of the most considerable instances of doing ill, wherein the *Fleshly-wise* are wont to think they may well take Liberty, in pursuit of any good Ends.

First, Spiritual Prudence will never allow us to set aside any Duty on Pretence of Necessity.

It will never yield, that we offend against God or Man; that in any thing we be false, undutiful, or unjust; that we dishonour our Parents, break our Oaths, Promises and Ingagements, covet other mens Goods, take what is not right, or with-hold what is; or break any one or more of God's Commandments, on the *Plea of Necessity*, or saying, it was necessary for us so to do. This, God knows, is too much set up in the World.

World. And when unjustifiable ways are taken, and things practised, which the very Actors are ready to own as otherwise ill done; yet is this thought a sufficient Reason why they should be done, because they were necessary, and they could not do without them.

But what were they necessary for? To please God, or to fulfil any Rule of his, or Precept of Religion? No, sure, they are not necessary to these Ends, but necessarily overthrow them. But they were unnecessary, for saving the things of this World; to keep what is ill got, or maintain what is ill done. But now these are not Religious, but Self-Ends; not for the other World, but for this. And these ways of supplying its Necessities, are not Spiritual, but Carnal; not Religious, but Worldly Prudence. And if we give way to break God's Precepts, for worldly Necessities: this is not to shew Religion, but Self-Love; not to set up God, but our Selves.

We are not to commit any Sin, as I have shewn, when that seems the most necessary, to procure the best, and most desirable Goods, either to God, the Publick, or our Selves. And if we might sin, rather than suffer, and take Liberty to set aside any Religious Duties, to supply the Call of worldly Necessities; what work would this make with the Commandments? And how are any of them a Duty, longer than they stand with our Convenience? What becomes of *Patience*, which is for dutifully bearing Hardships, not for removing them by Undutifulness? What becomes of the *Religion of taking up the Cross*, and of *Suffering for Righteousness*? We may bear the Cross, as I formerly

G

merly

merly observed, when we cannot help it; but then properly we take it up, when a Sin might avoid it. And it may be our *misfortune* sometimes, to suffer for Righteousness; as having no way in righteous, more than in unrighteous Courses, always to avoid Sufferings. But it cannot be our *Duty* to suffer for Righteousness, if without Breach of Duty, we may leave off to be righteous, to save Sufferings. At this rate, of forsaking the Commandment to stick to the World, or when a worldly Necessity drives him to it; contrary to what our Blessed Lord, and his Apostles taught, *a man may serve both God and Mammon, Mat. 6. 24. be a Friend of the World, and not an Enemy of God, Jam. 4. 4. They that are in the Flesh, this way may please God. And if the Carnal mind cannot become subject to the Law of God, as St. Paul says it cannot, the Law of God will by this Rule become Subject to it, Rom. 8. 7, 8. In Summ, there would be no Necessity of being transformed from this World, as St. Paul requires; but a Liberty of being conformed unto it, which he forbids, Rom. 12. 2. Nor any need of Denying our Selves, as Christ urges, if we would be his Disciples, Luk. 9. 23.*

So that this Plea, of *worldly Necessity setting aside our Duty in any Case*, is a Principle purely of this World, but not at all of Almighty God. It overthrows, as all the Rules, so all the Design of Religion, and the Grounds of good Practice. It can come into the Thoughts only of worldly-wise, not of truly Religious Persons, who never urged a Temporal Necessity against a Spiritual Duty, being not men of this World, but of a better. There can never be any Necessity of Sinning

ming to him that dare suffer. And he, who is resolved against Suffering, may think himself a worldly-wise man; but God will account him no good Christian.

But this now is otherwise, in the *Wisdom of this World*. Necessity, it thinks a Reason, not to be argued or disputed. And what it calls Necessary, is what is necessary to one, who is resolved to keep this World; not to one, who can part with it. What is necessary, not to one that would set God and Religion above the World, but that sets the World uppermost, and so makes a God of it. If it talk of any thing, being necessary for the Interest of God and Religion: it means only, for the worldly things about them. It looks not, what is necessary to keep Innocence; for other things it accounts more necessary than that: but what is necessary for carnal worldly Convenience. It is more for things necessary to present Safety, than for those which are necessary to good Hopes of Eternity. And to make men safe here, by affording visible Humane Securities; not by ingaging the Protection of God, and the Guard of an unseen Providence.

2. *Secondly*, Spiritual Prudence, will never allow us to *justify any Breach of Duty, by the Plea of Providence.*

This is the way of worldly-wise men, who are ready to catch at any thing, as a good Argument of a way's being approved by God, and pleasing to him, if it profits them. If God give Success, when they use unlawful ways and Expedients; especially, if in bringing that success about, there are any surprising or remarkable

Circumstances : they cry up the Hand of God, and think his prospering it so signally, is his approbation. God himself here, say they, is willing to become a Party, and such Success is his Testimony.

But Spiritual Wisdom teaches us to take the *Morality of Actions*, and the goodness or illness of things, from *Laws*, not from *Providence*. It is the *Laws of God*, in *Nature* or *Scripture*, that must teach us our *Duty*, and tell us what will please God, or what will offend him. *Sin*, *the Transgression of a Law*, as St. * *John* says; and *Obedience* is the keeping of them. And these *Laws* are publish'd in the *Nature of things*, and the *Word of God*; which are a plain, and sure *Promulgation of them*.

But as for *Providence*, its Design is not to be a *Publisher of Precepts*. God's *Providence* is not an *Act of his Legislation*, but of *Judicature and Execution*. Its part is not first to shew and promulge *Laws*; but, supposing those promulged before, to supervise the *Carriage of those*, they were promulged to, and execute their *Sanctions*; Or, to recompense *Actions* by suitable *Events*, according as they have either transgressed, or kept them. The *Judgments of God*, according to his *Will* before promulged, we may read in the *Events and Issues of Providence*. But what his *Will* is, the *Observance or Breach* whereof *Providence* thus rewards or punishes, we must read in the *Moral Nature of Things*, and the *Holy Scriptures*.

'Tis a bad Use therefore of *Providence*, to make it take off our *Eyes* from the *Morality of Things*,

Things, and the plain Voice of Laws : and look for what is pleasing to God , and according to his Will, only in the Events of Actions. Which is like leaving the clear Light of the Sun, to go to read by that of a Glow-worm. 'Tis to go read our Duty, where it was not intended to be writ; and Neglect, or over-look the perusal of that, where it is writ.

And 'tis worse, when we see both, to make Providence carry against plain Laws, and the Moral Nature of Things: which is to turn the Signification of Providence, not only against the Laws, but against it self. For the use of Providence, is to be a Government according to those Laws, and the Morality of Things. It is to be a Maintainer of them, by just Retribution : and so is only to back and strengthen , but never to oppose them.

And therefore Providence must never be urged, in Favour of an ill and unlawful thing. For since its right use, is to be a Retribution of Laws, and to reward Dutifulness: all its right Signification, and all our right Remarks thereupon, must be only for Encouragement to keep our Duty, but not to transgress it. It must never be pressed against Laws, but always for them : and must only draw us to trust, and depend upon God, in a good thing ; but never in an ill one, which Nature, or the Holy Scriptures have forbidden.

Indeed, as Providence is the Administration of God's Judicature here on Earth ; and he permits, or disposes of Events of things or Actions, in way of Government and Justice : there is a

Signification, of his Liking, or Disliking, in these Disposals. But 'tis hard and unsure, to fix this on Persons and Actions; to say, from these Issues of Providence alone, who, or what, he is Pleased or Displeased withal.

For in the same Issues and Events, Providence is Concerned with a Number of Persons, of the most contrary Qualifications: they are fatal to one, and favourable to another. But yet since therein he has an Eye at both; from the Event alone, we cannot say, which God likes, and which he dislikes; whether the Success, is to Reward the Actors Righteousness, or to punish the Sufferers Wickedness. Nay, oft-times in the Justice of Providence, God makes some Sinners the Executioners of others, and punishes one by anothers Offences, making them Grind each other to Pieces. So that here, on which side soever the Shew of Favor or Success falls, it doth not Signifie, that God is pleased with either. He will speed one, to punish another, when he is offended with both. *The Assyrians Success*, was only as *the Rod of God's Anger*, to scourge the wicked Nations. Which once done, he and his Ways, being no more pleasing to God than the others were, he was to be broken himself, and fall under like Judgments. *Is. 10. 5, 12, 16, &c.* *The wicked*, who in their Course of Wickedness, are far from being pleasing to him, yet, says the *Psalmist*, *are a Sword of thine*, and so long find Success therein: *Psal. 17. 13.* Yea, as the Thriving of some, is not always to shew Favor: so the Sufferings of others, in Events of Providence, is not always to shew Displeasure. For many times their Sufferings

ufferings are not Designed to punish the Sufferers, but only to try their Patience, and refine and manifest their Virtues, and rowze a sluggish World with the Sight of brave Examples. Such was the meaning of *David's* Sufferings and Persecutions under *Saul*. Such was the Signification of Providence, in the Sufferings of *Job*, of the *holy Prophets*, of our *Blessed Lord* and his *Apostles*, and of all the Noble and Heroick Spirits, the *Martyrs* and *Confessors*, of all Ages; whose Sufferings came not from Providence in a penal Way, but as a Privilege. Nay, sometimes, as in an useful, especially in a publick Person, they suffer so much, not altogether to prove or punish themselves, as to perplex others, and punish the People thereby. For the Sins and Transgressions of a People, many are the Changes of Princes, says *Solomon*, Prov. 28.2. As, on the contrary, others Success, is oft-times only to complete the time of their Respit, before they are Dragged to Punishment; or to allow them their full Measure of good things, (which, as our * Sa- * Luc. 16. viour intimates, are more liberally proportioned 25. out to them in this Life, because they are to have none in the next,) till they have filled up the Measure of their Sins, and so are Ripe for the Judgment of Providence. So that as it is no Signification of God's Dislike, that one Suffers by Providence: for *what Son or beloved is it, the Father chasteneth not?* saith the *Apostle*, Heb. 12. 7. So neither is it of his liking and Favor, that another succeeds by it, *there being*, as to this, *one Event*, as the *Wise Man* says, *both to the Righteous and the wicked*, Eccles. 9. 2.

I add, lastly, that what Favor or Disfavor, the Event of Providence, in way of Human Appearance, carries with it, is not to be soon Determined, till the whole Train is seen, (the upshot whereof may, and often doth, lie very Remote,) and till it appears which Party is most Prosperous and Successful in the End. The greatest present Unsuccessfulness, is most Ordinarily made use of by Providence, as a Step to much more valuable future Successes. Its Method is, to bring Light out of Darkness, and to compass Final Successes, by intermediate Disappointments. And who then can say assuredly, that Providence is for one, or against another, till they have run out the whole Length of the Chain of Effects, and the End appears. And this oft lies very far off, much further, it may be, than we are like to live to see what it will prove. And till this is seen, all judging of the Favor or Disfavor of Providence, from what Events went before, is most uncertain; not Right Judgment, but Self-Flattery and Delusion: whereof each Party serves, and wherewithal it pleases it self, according as its turn comes, in the Ebbs and Flows, and various Vicissitudes, of the intermediate Successes.

Thus, upon all these Accounts, to name no more, tho there is a Real Liking or Disliking, in the Events of Providence, which is known to, and Design'd by God himself: Yet, is the Application of this, to things or Persons, so much all Uncertainties, and the Favor or Disfavor of Issues, so promiscuous, as appears to us, that from the Events of Providence alone, we cannot learn whom he loves or whom he hates, what is

Pleasing

Pleasing or Displeasing to him. *No man, as Solomon says in this case, can know either Love or Hatred, Good or Evil, by all that is before him, Eccl. 9. 1.* To learn this from Providence, besides the visible Events, we must weigh the Merit of Actions, from Laws; and stay the Final End of Successes, which are the Recompence of them. And when those are seen, but not before, from the Qualities of Persons and Attempts, we must read, whether any Success, were for a just Encouragement of the Actors Righteousness, or Punishment of the Sufferers Wickedness; whether it is for Proof and Trial, or for Recompence. Always making the Voice of Providence, to assert and establish the Moral Nature of things, and the Laws and Duties Revealed in Scripture; but never in any wise, to Deny, or Gainsay them.

And therefore the Signification of Providence, is not to teach those that are ignorant of their Duty, or of Good and Ill: but only those that already understand it. It is no Expofitor of the Will of God, to those who know it not; but only an encourager of its Observance, to those who know what it is.

Hence Men ought never to Cry up the hand of God, or Call in Providence, to Prove the Goodness of any Actions; but only to press those, which were Proved before. It is not to instruct Men, what is their Duty; but to carry them on, to the observance of those Duties, wherein they are otherwise already instructed.

Hence also, we must not think it enough in any Attempts, to say we follow Providence, and go as God makes way for us. We are to follow
Laws,

Laws, not Opportunities. For Providence affords us Opportunities to break Laws, as well as to keep them. Power, and Opportunity, are among the necessary Causes of all that is Done. And Providence puts things in Mens Power; and Gives them Opportunity to Do them. But Opportunities for ill things, are not Warranties, but only Trials and Temptations. All ill Men follow Providence, when they accomplish ill things, which they could not Do without Providence Gave Opportunities; and when Good Men, whom they are pursuing for ill Ends, fall into their Hands.

If any therefore are ignorant what their Duty is, and trust to learn it from the Issues of Providence, taking any Way for the Will and Command of God, when they see the hand of God, or some remarkable Success attending it; this will lead them into infinite Delusions. It will carry them to justify the most wicked Actions, recorded in Scripture, or in Daily Experience, infinite Numbers whereof in all Times and Places, God for wise Ends permits, or speeds, and prospers; and that against the most Beloved Persons, not excepting his own Son, or the holy Church. Besides, as it is made to justify the Urgers of it, in their Way to Day; it may be, and ordinarily is, as well made to Shame and Condemn them to Morrow. Successes usually running, as at one time remarkably for, so at another time, as remarkably against them. It is no Rule for the wise and well instructed, who never take it for a Rule of Duty, but always bring it to the Rule, and expound the Liking or Disliking of God therein, by their known

known Duty. It is only a Rule for the Ignorant to take up, and those, as it finds, so it will leave ignorant of their Duty: nay, which is worse, it will mislead them, as I say, into the Greatest Errors and Violations thereof, carrying them into Sin, and Shame enough too, before they have Done. It is a way for Men, that know, or may know, they are Doing ill, to flatter themselves, or abuse others, with faint, but false Colors, of God's acceptance. And this may pass among the Worldly Wise, who seek to be in Ease and Credit in their Worldly Injoynments. 'Tis a Part of Worldly Prudence, so to expound these Events of Providence, not as may best serve their Duty, but their Worldly Ends. But he who would be Spiritually Wise, or Wise for his Duty, must always fetch it from the Laws of God, which are the Rule of Duty. And never make Providence, which is to serve as the Motive and Encouragement of Dutifulness; to serve as a Plea to justify the Breach thereof.

Thirdly, To this Plea of Providence, for justifying of ill Actions, I shall annex another not unlike, viz. that of Prophecy. When Men think themselves authorised to Do an unlawful and forbidden thing, by fancying it the accomplishment of some Prediction, which God will applaud, and take Pleasure in.

I tax not here all Application of Scripture-Prophecies, in the Revelations, or other Books. Albeit those Prophecies being made concerning the Future State of *Christ's Church*, which reaches out both to such a Length of Time, and Latitude of Places, must needs be very Difficult, and generally

generally unsure, especially before the Final Events have brought a full Light to them, to apply to particular Times and Countries. And therefore it becomes Men not to be too Positive and Peremptory, but to shew Modesty therein, which, a little time makes the most confident Interpreters and their Admirers, for the most Part, to see, had been their best Security, and truest Wisdom.

But what I now blame, is the like use of antecedent Prophecies, as was before of subsequent Providences and Events, *viz. To take off Mens Eyes and Attention, from the Morality of Actions,* and instead thereof, to presume God's Approbation of them, from their Fancied Fulfilling what the Scripture justifies and speaks well of, in some Predictions. 'Tis of mighty use to Men, in any Great and Daring Attempt, to have their Followers, and others, think there is Destiny in their Behalf; that they are only accomplishing, what God has long before Designed they should, and Doing his Business. This renders them, both most violent in their Motions, and incurable, either by any Admonitions, or even almost by any Unsuccessfulness and Discouragements; thinking themselves all the while God's chosen Instruments for effecting what they have in hand, and sure of Success, as having his immutable Decrees, and Predictions, on their side. And the Serviceableness of such a Belief, to their worldly Projects and Undertakings, tempts, as sometimes mistaken Zealots or Enthusiasts; so, at others, Designing Men, to clap a Prophecy, especially a Scripture one, to what they are Driving on, tho really it be

be a most unjust Thing. Well knowing, if once it be Received, that God has foretold their Success; that by all Persons of a strong Faith, (as Persons of most Devotion will most endeavour to be,) their Work will be esteemed as sure, as if it were already Done.

The Law of God, and the Voice of Nature, pronounce most plainly and loudly, *Thou shalt not forswear thy self, or falsifie thine Oaths; Honor thy Father and Mother, i. e. thy Civil as well as Natural Parents: Thou shalt not Kill: Thou shalt not Steal: Thou shalt not bear false Witness: Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbors Goods.* But, when Men have been running headlong, and to the Greatest Extremities, in the Breach of all these Moral Duties, as they were by Name in our late Distractions and Civil Wars, in 41: they have Fancied themselves, and been Cryed up by others, as authorised to all this, by a confident Exposition and Application of Prophecies, or, as the Accomplishers of Predictions. Particularly, † that of the two Witnesses, in the Revelations, who were to shut the Heaven that it should not rain, i. e. say they, to restrain the biggest Powers in Church and State, from their wonted Influence: and to turn the Waters into Blood, or, as they explain it, a still Nation into War and Bloodshed, Rev. 11. 6. Which, by making it a Prediction of what should fall out at that time in Great Britain, they turn'd into a Call and Justification, of all that horrible Violence, Injustice, Perfidiousness, and utter Breach of Moral Precepts, which the Parliament and their Adherents, were most wickedly and ungodly Driving on against

† See Contin. of Friendly Debate, p. 64. to 73.

against the King and Church. Here, by setting aside the Morality of Actions, and fetching the Approbation of God from fanciful Approbation of Prophecy, they made themselves *God's choicest Witnesses*, spoken of in the *Revelations*; not while they are testifying for him as *Martyrs*, by their own Blood and Sufferings; or with *Faith*, and *Patience*, which is the Voice of his Precepts. But whilst they are doing it, as *Rebels*; Arming against their Lawful Sovereigns, who are God's Vicegerents; and running on Murders, and Robberies, Committed after the Liberties of War, without any Lawful Commission and Warranty, upon the Persons and States, both of their Prince and Fellow Subjects, which are all out of the Way of Morality, and expressly against all those Precepts.

And this is leaving off to be Guided by Laws which are plain, and certain Rules; for Prophecies, which Designing Projectors, and hearer-fanciful Enthusiasts, will accommodate as they please. It is running boldly against Gospel-Duties, and the Practice of Obedience and Holiness. On Pretence we are ministering under the Spirit of Prophecy, and serving Predictions. As if the same Spirit, which is the *Spirit of Prophecy*, were not also the *Spirit of Obedience*. Or had not Dictated, all our Moral and Gospel Duties; as well as Gospel Predictions. Or, as if he wanted Power or Care, to Preserve one, without Destroying the other; and would not verifie all his own Predictions, without help of our Sins; nor could remain true, if we remain innocent. It is not a thing incident, to any sober and obedient Christians.

lians: but either to Designing and Hypocritical impostors, or vain and wicked Enthusiasts. Their Vanity soon appears in the Events, when they answer not their bold, and confident Pronunciations: And their Wickedness, in that they not only run headlong under this Cover, into Immoralities, and wicked Courses: but profane and abuse the holy Scriptures to Patronize Ungodliness, Press and Wrest Prophecies to Countenance Breach of Precepts, urge the Authority of God against himself, and intitle him to their Abominations. And, indeed, a man must needs be far forsaken of God, as he always is, that is fallen from moral Honesty and an obedient Temper, before he can overlook the plainest moral Duties, and boldly transgress them on such Fancies.

CHAP. VI. SECT. I.

Of Christian Simplicity and Sincerity. And of not Deceiving by Actions.

FROM these Pleas, to *Palliate Doing ill*, I come now to tax some main and most considerable Instances thereof; particularly the use of *insincere Arts*, and *throwing off of Relative Duties*, to serve *Publick or Private Good*, wherein great Liberty is taken, and pleaded for, by the worldly Wise.

1. First, *Christian Prudence* is never for serving Ends by Deceit, but is against all Use of Falshood and Insincerity.

Deceit, is the great Art of worldly Wisdom. It has recourse to Tricks, when it cannot compass its

• Sapien-
tia hujus
mundi est
cor ma-
chination-
ibus te-
gere, sen-
sum ver-
bis velare,
quæ falsa
sunt vera
ostendere,
quæ vera
sunt falsa
demon-
strare.
Gregor.
Magn.
l. 10. c. 16.
Expos.
Moral. in
Job, upon
Deridetur
justi sim-
plicitas,
Job 12. 4.

its aim by Truth and Openness, and serves it self of Men, by Imposture and Delusion. *The Folly of Fools*, says the *wise Man*, (so he calls worldly Wisdom, which is mere Folly in the Account of God and Religion,) is *Deceit*, i. e. it lies all in Cheating and Deceiving, what it cannot bring about fairly, seeking to accomplish by Arts of Falshood and Circumvention, *Prov. 14. 8. Their Counsels*, says he again, *are Deceit*, *Prov. 12. 5.* * *The Wisdom of this World*, saith S. Gregory, is to cover and conceal their hearts by subtil Sleights and Devices, to Draw a Veil before their Meanings by dark or deceitful Expressions, to make Falshoods appear as if they were Truths, and Truths pass for Falshoods. The general aim of worldly Wisdom, indeed, is to compass its End by any means. And where it has Power and Confidence enough, it will not stay perhaps, to go about and use Deceit, but serve it self by open Violence. But in most Cases, it needs to serve its Ends, by keeping them undiscerned. Or when it doth serve ill Ends, it would also save its Credit, by not being thought to serve them, which is by Deceit. So that Deceit, is its great and usual Instrument.

But, contrary to this, Simplicity and Plain-Dealing, are the great Duty, and inviolable Care, of Christian Wisdom. *We have renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty*, saith S. Paul, *not walking in craftiness*, 2 Cor. 4. 2. *There is scarce any thing that makes us Degenerate so far from Spiritual Nobleness, as Fraud and Deceit: and nothing doth more hurt in the Church, than versute Simulation*, saith S. † Chrysostom. Simplicity is what Christ requires

† On Diaconi non
bilingues,
1 Tim. 3.
8.

of us, at the most pressing Seasons, when we are put most to our Wits, and Driven to use any Arts or Double Dealings, to save our selves. *Behold*, says he, to his Disciples, *I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves: be ye therefore wise as Serpents, but innocent as Doves*, Mat. 10. 16. The Word is *ἀνέγκαιος*, which signifies Simplicity, as well as Innocency. So 'tis rendered Rom. 16. 19. where *σοφὸν* and *ἀνέγκαιος*, are Translated, *Wise concerning Good, and Simple concerning Evil*. And accordingly, in some Manuscripts, our Saviours Words are read, not *ἀνέγκαιος*, but *ἀνδύς*, most Simple *as are the Doves*. If any thing could excuse the Subtilty of Foxes, their Doublings and Deceitful Turnings; it would be the Pressing Necessity of such Times, when all their fallacious Arts are only Evasions, and they betake themselves to ways of Delusion, and of begetting a wrong Belief or Expectation in others, only to save themselves. Yet even then, will not Christ allow his Followers, to use any more of the Serpentine Subtily, than what consists with the Doves Simplicity.

And accordingly S. Paul, when he speaks of his being pressed in Asia out of measure, above strength; when they had the Sentence of Death, and no hope in themselves: yet professes for all this, that he had held his Conversation in the World, not with *Fleshly Wisdom*; but in *Simplicity and Godly Sincerity*, and by the Grace of God, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9, 12. And it was amidst all the great Tryals and Perils, he run through in the Discharge of his Ministry, under which, says he, *we faint not*, that, instead of ever having Recourse to, he Declares, as I noted,

H

how

* Τα ἡγού-
μενα αἰ-
σχύνει

how *he had renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty* or * *Shame*, never privately betaking himself to that, which he should be ashamed to have known abroad; *not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully*, 2 Cor. 4. 1, 2. In such Tryals, Faith in God, and Trust in Providence, made all that up to them, which crafty Shifts do to carnal Politicians, who can ground no Hope, but in humane Appearances. They would never part from their Simplicity, for carnal Security. Whilst they were in this, or any other discharge of Duty, which is God's way, they knew they were in God's hand: and so long, they were not afraid of whatsoever could befall them.

In the Acceptation of the World, *Simplicity* has one Sense, wherein it is no Virtue, *viz.* as it signifies *Unwariness*. A simple man, in the common way of speaking, is the same as an unwise, or unwary man, that doth not see before, or look about him. And this is no Commendation of Goodness, but impeachment of Discretion: it shews no Person to have a better Heart, but only a weaker Understanding. It argues nothing, but that a Man either wants Understanding, or neglects the use thereof, when he needs to shew it; which is no Ornament in the Eyes of God, more than 'tis in the Eyes of men. And instead of calling us to Simplicity in this sense, true Spiritual Wisdom calls it; *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and ye Fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof*, says Wisdom, Prov. 1. 22, 23.

But the *Simplicity*, which is a Virtue, and which Christian Wisdom enjoyns, is only Veracity and Plain-

Plainness, in what it shews to others; not Improvidence, or Unwariness, in what it either doth to, or expects from them. It doth not think every Person it has to do withal, means honestly, because it means so it self; nor, by heedless Security, or Short-sightedness, doth expose it self without any Guards against Dangers, or dishonest Actions. The virtuously simple, are provident and wary, as well as the worldly crafty; but with this difference.

The Caution of the virtuously Simple, is first against Sin, and next to that against Suffering. It is more concern'd, how to keep true and innocent, than how to keep safe and quiet. In seeking, either to obtain Good, or shun Loss, its Eye and Care is in the first place, to do nothing that will offend God, or is of ill Report and dishonourable to Religion: nor that will delude the Opinion, or abuse the Faith and Expectation of men. And when this Consistency with Religion and a good Conscience, is taken care for, but not before, it is as wise and watchful to remove, or avoid all worldly Evil, as it can. It seeks out the Subtility and *Wisdom of the Serpent*, when, according to our Lord's Rule, it has first secured *the innocency of the Dove*. It first considers of the Lawfulness, of the way it is about to take: and then is moved by the Expedience, or Usefulness thereof; but never admits of the least thought, of doing it self or others good, by the Breach of any Commandment.

But contrariwise, the Caution of the Crafty, or of the Wisdom of the Flesh, is either all, or at least, in the first place, against Suffering; and none at all, or

only in the next place, against Sin. The Caution of this World, is for the Ends, and things of this World. To save our worldly Interests, or serve our fleshly Ease and Appetites; is that, which it would have first done. And that, if it can, by ways of Innocence, Truth, and Openness; but yet so, as to take up with unlawful means, with Arts of Falshood, or things of ill Report, rather than it should be left undone. And this, where it bears the most good will for Religion; but too often the Caution of fleshly Wisdom or worldly Craft, is all against Persecution, Loss, or Suffering; but none at all against Sin. So that in any case, it only considers what is fit to be done for Interest in this World. And if any means serve the Flesh, and be desirable upon that account; it little troubles or concerns it self, whether it savour of Veracity or Deceit, whether in the account of Conscience and Religion, it be good or bad.

Now this *virtuous Simplicity*, is an *undisguised and invariable Tenour, of Truth and Innocence*. It excludes all doing hurt, and is especially opposite to all the ways and Methods of Deceit. It speaks *τὸ τὸ ἴδιον ἀδελον*, and *τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀδελον*, as † Nazianzen marks of the *ἀπλότης*, or *Simplicity of his Father*, i. e. *undisguisedness of Soul*, and *unfallaciousness of Manners or Conversation*. Whatever it seems, it is; and it never is, what will vex or harm others. It is Veracity, without Lyes; Singleness, without Double-dealings, or corrupt Mixtures; Openness, without studied Concealment, and close Reserves, of what it is call'd to profess; Plainness, without amusing or misleading Dress, of what it professes; and Harmlesness, without doing

† Orat. 19.
Tom. 1.
p. 297. &
p. 300.

doing any Wrong, or Hurt to others. Such an uniform Veracity and Undeceitfulness, both of Mind and Carriage, is that Simplicity, which Christian Prudence requires of us. And which God calls for, when he bids us to *throw out all Deceit*, Mar. 7. 22. to *lay aside all Guile and Hypocrisies*, 1 Pet. 2. 1. to be no *Deceitful workers*, 2 Cor. 11. 13. And declares him only to be fit to *stay in God's Tabernacle, and dwell in his holy Hill, who speaketh the Truth in his heart*; or, whose words never go against the thoughts and intents of his Heart, but always exprels and bear out what is there, *Psal. 15. 1, 2.*

1. The First thing implied in virtuous Simplicity, which Christian Prudence enjoyns, is *Veracity*, in opposition to *Falshood and Lyes*, εἰλικρίνῃς *Hesychius* explains by τὸ ἀληθὲς being *sincere*, by being true or *veracious*. Simplicity bottoms all on Truth, which it never tempers or brews together, or daubs over with Falshood. He that is for Simplicity in Truth, must needs abhor Lyes, never speaking contrary to what he thinks, (which, sure, is not to *speak the Truth in his heart*, as God requires;) nor giving in a False Testimony of Persons, or Relation of things.

1. This will exclude all *spontaneous use of False Speeches*, when of themselves men are ready to frame, or tell Lyes, for Ends. Contrary to the Rule of Spiritual Wisdom, which every where most plainly forbids *Lying*, and says, *Lye not one to another, Brethren, seeing ye have put off the Old man*, Col. 3. 9. and tells us of the *Lake of Fire*, for those that love, and make Lyes, Rev. 21. 8, 27.

And also all speaking Lyes, out of Fear or Compliance;

pliance; when, for escaping Rebuke, or soothing men, any Persons expressly assent to things against their own Judgments, or say and unsay in different Companies. Thus, to the *Deacons*, who, going about from house to house, were like to be under the Temptation to say and unsay, or speak different things, as might best suit with different Companies; St Paul gives it as a particular Charge, *not to be double-tongued*, 1 Tim. 3. 8. *double-tongued*, that is, says * *Theophylact*, *not thinking one thing, and saying another, or saying à l'air. τὸν δὲ αἰὶνὰ ἐνελόν, one thing to one, and another thing to another.* And to the *Ephesians*, that putting away lying, they speak every man truth with his neighbour, as being members one of another: forbidding Lyes, not only in direct Assertions, but in Soothing and Dissimulation; against those, as *Grotius* observes, who, to curry Favour with *Jews* or *Gentiles*, were apt to speak contrary to what they thought, Eph. 4. 25.

'Tis not for such virtuously simple Persons, to speak Lyes in *Officiousness*, or with intent to hurt none, but to do others a kindness. For ill is not to be done, that good may come of it; and therefore to do others a kindness, they may no more break this, than they may any other Precept. The Rule of Kindness to our Neighbour, is to love him as our selves; but tell a Lye we dare not, for the sake of our own Advantage, and so not for his. Nay, we must not tell a Lye, in hopes to do good thereby to Religion, or for the sake of God himself. This really was the Case of *Job's Friends*. They were forgers of lyes against him, Job 13. 4. But all those were officious Lyes, or out of their *Officiousness*,

cioufness, as I before noted, to God himself. And yet *Job's* was a just Reproof against them, *Will ye speak wickedly for God, and deceitfully for him?* v. 7.

Veracity, or speaking Truth, we must carefully practise, not only for its *Usefulness*, or doing Kindness, but for the *Truth's sake*. We must bear a conscientious regard to it, as it bears the *Image of God*, wherein we were at first formed, and whereto we are renewed in *Christ*. Put on

the new man, says the *Apostle*, which, after God, is created in true Holiness, or † the holiness of Truth.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man Truth, &c. *Eph. A. 24, 25.* God is the God of Truth, and of Veracity or true speaking. And the Devil,

God's grand Enemy, is particularly noted, as the Father of Lyes, and a Spirit of Falshood. And, as

the Authors and Heads themselves are: so are their Children distinguish'd by the same. They

that love, and speak Truth; are Children of the God of Truth; as they that love, and utter Lyes,

are Children of the Father of Lyes. For his Children they are, as our Saviour told the Jews, whose

works and lusts they do. And he abode not in the Truth from the beginning, because there is no Truth

in him. When he speaks a Lye, he speaks it of his own; for he is a Liar, and the Father of it, *Joh.*

8. 39, 44. Veracity then, or speaking Truth, is what we are bound to, not only as beneficial to

our Neighbours; but as resembling God, or bearing his Image, and being a Divine Perfection.

And accordingly, this is the injunction of the Scriptures, not to lye one to another, whatever be the

Pretence; to speak, as the Psalmist says, that Truth which is in our heart, not that Falshood which

† Ἐν ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.

Or, as in some Readings, as Curcell.

Lect. Ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

In Holiness and Truth.

makes for our Brother's convenience. *To put away all guile, and hypocrisies*; which admits not of retaining any to serve turns, as *St. Peter* says, *I Pet. 2. 1.*

Some, indeed, have fetch'd a Plea for *Officious Lyes*, from the Case of the *Egyptian Midwives*, or the Practice of *David in his Distress*, when he fled from *Saul*; or other Scripture-instances. But the Practice of a Good Man, is no Argument: a thing is well done, if it be visibly against the Rule of Well-doing. No, not tho it have encouragement from God; as in the Case of the *Midwives*, whose houses God built, for their sparing the *Israelitish* infants. For in such mixt Actions, a Gracious God is prone to reward the Good, which is predominant; and overlook the ill, which is compassionably interwoven with it: as he did with the *Midwives*, if they spoke falsely, recompensing their Charity, not their officious Falseness. Not to dispute, whether what they said was really false or no, as may be justly questioned in some instances usually alledged in this case, particularly the *Midwives Answer to Pharaoh*.

2. But besides this Instance of Veracity, or not *lying in Words*: there is also another Part of it, which Christian Simplicity takes care of too, and that is, not to tell a Lye, or deceive in Actions.

There is a Signification in several Actions, as well as there is in Words and Expressions. Some, 'tis true, are more arbitrary and unsetled in their meanings, and may signifie as men please. But others, are of more fixed and stated Significations. I mean not only as *Natural Signs* and *Indications*, of our *Approbation*, or *Dislike*, or other inward

inward Sentiments, But there is also as good Authority of Law, or Institution, or common and received Use and Custom, to settle the Signification of some Actions, as there is for Words themselves. And accordingly, in all reasonable Apprehension, men are as much understood, to have professed or declared things by some Actions, and in all Courts shall stand as firmly bound by them, as if they had utter'd the same things with their Mouths.

And being there is equally a settled Signification in Actions: there is also room for our being true or false, for affirming or denying in them, as well as there is in words themselves. Thus the Scripture mentions those, who deny God in their works, Tit. i. 16. And if my mouth hath kissed my hand (the known and received Profession of Worship) to the Sun, or Moon, saith Job, I should therein have denied the God that is above. Yea, says he, it had been an iniquity to be punished by the Judge: or as good a Declaration of his being an Idolater, whereof the Judges then took Cognizance, as if he had professed so with his Lips, Job 31. 26. 27. 28.

Thus they thought, and believed in the Primitive Church: teaching, that men might confess or deny, with other Faculties, as well as with their Tongues; by complying in Actions, as well as by verbal Declarations. If, * says the * In Mat. Ancient and Learned Author of the Commentary on Hom. 25. St. Matthew, whom, for his Skill in expounding in c. 10. Scripture, Erasmus, in his Preface to the Reader, v. 32, 33. quicumque me confessus fuerit, &c. ap. Chrysostom.

Equals

Equals to St. Chrysostom himself. If any one, says he, shall say unto thee, Thou shalt not eat of things offered to the Idol, but only view and behold the Idols, how beautiful they are. If thou lookest upon them on such a provocation, thou hast denied Christ with thine eyes. Not that 'tis any thing, to look on an Idol; but herein is the Sin, to look on such an invitation. And if thou shalt refuse to look, by such Refusal thou confessest Christ. Therefore it is written, Turn away thine eyes, lest they behold Vainity, Psal. 118. But if he shall say to thee, I ask not that thou shouldst look upon the Idol; only listen and give ear, how that Gentile blasphemes Christ, that he may glorifie his own Gods: if thou standest to hearken, with thine ears thou hast denied Christ. If he shall say to thee, I seek not to have thee hear Christ blasphemed: but lo! how they are offering Incense to the Gods; only stand, and receive the Odour of that Incense: if thou comest near, and smelldest it, by thy Smell thou hast offended Christ. Again, if he says to thee, Do not chew the flesh with thy teeth, but only seem as if thou didst, and feign thy self to eat of the Sacrifice: if thou shalt feign a Taste, tho thou dost not taste it; by thy Taste, thou hast that way denied Christ. But if thou wilt not feign, thou hast therein confessed him: as Eleazar, who by eating flesh that was really of his own provision, would not fallaciously make, as if he had eaten that of the Sacrifice commanded by the King, 2 Macch. 6. If he shall say to thee, I would not have thee feign thy self to eat of the Sacrifice, but only touch the Idol with thine hand, or hold an Incense-Pan: if thou touchest, or handlest it, by thy touch thou hast denied Christ; but if thou refusest,

by thy Touch thou hast confessed him, as it is written, If there be any iniquity in my hands. For all the Faculties and Members, either of thy Soul or Body, God hath created, not only with an Eye to thee for use, but also to himself for his own Glory.

And since men may thus affirm or deny in their Actions, as well as in their Expressions; they may be alike true or false, shew Veracity or Lying, in both. We may do a Lye, as well as tell a Lye; and deceive by working, no less than by speaking: as the Scripture * tells us, of working Deceit, Psal. 101. 7. and of Deceitful workers, 2 Cor. 11. 13. calling those False Apostles. So, who, as † Chrysostom notes, assuming only *μεγαλειαν τῆς ἀληθείας*, the Person and outward appearance of Truth, thus acting a Part, served the Purposes of Errour, all their fair shews, being only acting a Part to deceive men.

And as this is true of Facts, so likewise of Non-Facts or Omissions, in things, which we are bound to do and profess. The not doing these, as I formerly noted, when we are called to them, signifies our being ashamed of them, or denying them; as the same would be signified by our Expression. Confession of a Duty, may be by our Practice, as truly as by our Words; and Denial thereof may be by the same. And therefore if we refuse to do it, when God gives us a just Call thereto; in our visible Practice we disown, tho it may be, at the same time, inwardly in our hearts, we joyfully embrace it.

Now Christian Simplicity, will not allow us to falsifie any of these ways. As we may not lye, concerning any of the Articles of Faith:

So

* Job 6.

15.

Isa. 24. 16.

† in loc.

Ed. Sav.

p. 673.

So neither concerning any of the Duties, or Laws of Practice. And as it is against the Duty, of *speaking the Truth in our heart*, to speak against what we inwardly believe of them, in Words: so likewise, to do against it, in Actions. Truth must be kept in Doing, as well as in Speaking: the same Sincerity shewn in the use of either Sign; since both are of fixed, and instituted Signification.

Among *significant Actions*, there is more particularly a Signification in the *Observance of Days*, which are known and plain Professions of what is aimed at in such Observations. To observe a *Day of Thanksgiving*, for instance, for any Event; is to profess that we are glad of that Event, and thankful to God for it. To observe a *Day of Fasting*: if it be *impetratory*, or for obtaining something future; is a Profession, that we are desirous of that future thing, and would ingage God to bring it about: Or, if it be chiefly *penitentiary*, and for bewailing something past; that we are sorry for it, and seek to appease his Wrath provoked thereby. Now, if men would deal with the Simplicity of Christians in these Observances, unless in heart they are inwardly affected; as the keeping of these Days testifies, and rejoyce or desire, as such Observance professes; they should not joyn, or go along in the keeping of them.

For the Signification of these, is most express. It is instituted and fixed upon them, by *Laws* and *Edicts*. The same Authority, that calls men to meet together at these times, appoints the Signification, and tells them the Reason why. Here
the

then is an instituted Signification in these Assemblies, that has Authority and Law to stand upon. And whatever men inwardly intend, this is externally professed, by their resorting to, and joyning therein. And accordingly, by such Resort, or Refusal of it; they are understood to testify and declare their Concurrence, or standing off, from what is thereby signified or professed, in the Account, both of their Rulers, and of all others. They rate the Neglecters, not as prophane or irreligious, but as disaffected Persons. These Assemblies are a Test, not of Religion and Devotion, but of Parties and Times. So Refusal speaks Dissent from the Signification appointed; as assembling doth Approbation and Concurrence therewith. And all People are ready to say, such a Person is for the Design and Signification thereby carried on, because he kept the Day, and met at the Assembly held thereupon:

Now the Authority of Laws or Edicts, and Custom or received Use, are among the chief things, that fix and settle Significations. And since they fix such Meanings in these Days and Assemblies: the Observance, or Refusal thereof in us, are in the Nature of Professions, either Affirmations or Denials. And, according as they declare, either that Truth, which is in our Heart, or what is contrary to it; our Profession thereby, is either true or false. If we meet at the Assembly, which is to use the Sign, and, at the same time, have inwardly no such Meaning: this is to signify and profess, what we do not mean; which is not Sincerity, but Dissimulation.

tion. We profess to desire what is sought in the Institution of the Day, by our outward Act, when in Heart we do not desire it; or to be glad of an Event, when really, perhaps, we are sorry for it: which is only to put on a false Person, and act a Part; to be an out-side Complier, but a real Hypocrite.

This Profession, by outward Observance of such Days and Assemblies, of what is contrary to our Heart and inward Sentiments;

1. Is contrary to the owning of Duties, which God requires; or to the Part of Confessors. If a thing is against any Rule of Religion, it is against Religion to desire it. And if it is against Religion to desire a thing, it is a Duty of Religion not to desire it. And if it is our Duty not to desire it, we are bound not to smother and conceal, but profess that Duty, when called thereunto. Now when an ill thing, or Breach of Duty, comes upon us, our Confession is testifying against the illness; either in Words, or in Practice, by our Refusal thereof. We betray the Cause of Duty in going along, which is to transgress it in visible appearance, and seem to the World, as if we disbelieve, or have thrown it off; but we assert it by our refusing. *Qui fallaces in excusatione prestigias querit, negavit.* He that seeks to bring himself off, by a fallacious Sleight or juggling Trick, and by seeming to comply with the Persecutors when he does not, therein has denied Christ, say the * Clergy of the Church of Rome, speaking of the necessity of confessing him. When the meaning of any Days or Assemblies therefore, is to profess desires, or affections, against any part of Duties, or Religion

* Ap.
Cypr. Ep.
30.

gion: if we could act like carnal Compliyers, we shall visibly Practise as others Do, and seem to desire where we Do not. But if we would discharge the Part, both of Sincere Christians, and of Right and Acceptable Confessors, we shall own the unlawfulness of the thing, and give our Testimony against it, by *openly Refusing*. We shall not pretend to Do, or make other men think we Do, what in Conscience we dare not Do: but dare to Practise and Profess, what our Duty and Conscience is.

2. *It is judged insincere by our selves, in the like Observance of Days, or Meetings on such Occasions.* The Festival of *Christmas*, and *Easter*, for instance, are appointed as *Professions of Joy*, for the *Birth and Resurrection of Christ*. And would not the common Sense of Mankind say, he did greatly Prevaricate, who would come to observe either of these, and yet did not believe it? The *Thirtieth of January*, is a Profession of Shame and Sorrow, for the *Murder of our late Martyred Sovereign*. And should we not call it Hypocrisie, for any person to appear there, who did not in Heart condemn, but justify that Murder, and think it well done? The *Fifth of November*, is a Profession of Gladness, for the Discovery of the *Rouder Treason*. And would not he dissemble notably, in appearing at that Days Assembly, who is inwardly sorry for the Miscarriage of it, and heartily wishes that Plot had gone on? Take it in any Case then, where we have no Temptation to mislead, or particular Concern to byass us: and this Compliance in outward Observance, where the Signification is contrary to our inward

inward Sentiments, is Dissimulation and Hypocrisie, our selves being Judges. And how can we hope to clear our Sincerity and Simplicity therein before any just and indifferent Judge, when, making us but once indifferent, and no longer Parties, and we are all ready to condemn the Fallens of it our selves.

3. It was so judged and esteemed, in the Primitive Church; as appears by their Dealing with the Observers of Jewish or Gentile Fasts, or Festivals. Those Days, were of fixed and received Significations. And the Observance of those Times was a known Profession, of what was signified by them. And therefore when any Christian who had nothing of the Jewish or Gentile Apprehensions, did externally joyn, as several did in their Observation; they could only publish their own Hypocrisie therein. The only way they had, to bring themselves off from being Apostates, was to say they still retained their own Faith; and, tho they might use the Jewish or Gentile Sign, together with them, yet, they had nothing of their meaning and intention. Which is no better, than to say in other words, that whilst they believed one thing, they professed another. And accordingly, such Persons were censured, for their scandalous and dissembling Compliances, by the * Apostolical Canons; as they were also, by the Council of † Laodicea afterwards.

* Can. 70.

† Can. 71.

† Can. 37,

38, 39.

For further Proof hereof, and also to set off by more Instances, this part of Simplicity, of not Deceiving by Actions; I observe that,

4. It was rejected, as Deceitful and Dishonest Carriage

Carriage, by the Pious and Good People among the Jews. When old Eleazar was required, on Pain of Death, to eat of unlawful Meats: his old Acquaintance, that had the Charge of that wicked Feast, took him aside, and besought him, to bring Flesh of his own Provision, such as was lawful for him to use; and make, as if he did eat of the Flesh, taken from the Sacrifice commanded by the King. But what says the Good Old Man, to this Deceitful way of Escaping, or seeming to do in outward shew and Pretence, what he durst not, and would not do, in Reality and Truth? It becometh not our Age, saith he, in any wise to dissimble, whereby many young persons might think, that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange Religion. And so they, through mine hypocrisie, and desire to live a little time, should be deceived by me. Whereby, tho for the Present, I should get a little Respite with Men: yet should I not escape the Hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead, 2 Macch. 6. 21, 22, 24, 25, 26. And of the same Judgment, were the Fathers in the Council of Ancyra, held before the first Council of Nice, who in the seventh Canon, punish those that go to the Heathen Idolatrous Feasts, in the usual and appointed Places; thinking to clear themselves, by carrying along with them their own Food, and there eating thereof only, not of the other which is polluted.

5. It was condemned so in like Cases, in the holy Scriptures. To withdraw from the Tables of Heathens, was a thing of settled and received Signification among the Jews; professing their Abhorrence, or Belief of the Unlawfulness of such Inter-

* Council.
Ancy.
Can. 7. 3
zon. in
Can.

course. Now, S. Peter had no such Belief, knowing that in *Christianity*, God had made *Jews* and *Gentiles* both one: and therefore, when *Jews* were away, as at *Antioch*, he could go in to *Gentiles*, and eat with them. Before certain zealous *Jews* of *Jerusalem*, came from *James*, saith S. Paul, *he did eat with the Gentiles*, Gal. 2. 12. But when the *Jews* were come, he, that had not their Apprehension or Sentiments, would joyn in this external Profession thereof; and withdrew himself, as they did, in Compliance, and for fear of offending them. When they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, as the *Jews* did, *Fearing them which were of the Circumcision*. Here was an usage of the Sign of Abhorrence, together with, and before them. But by one, that did not abhor a Gentile Table, as this withdrawing signified, in common *Jewish* Construction, and in the Opinion of those that withdrew with him. And what now, says S. Paul, to this Action? He Declares, *That he was to be blamed for it*, Vers. 11: that it was *not upright walking*, Vers. 14. that it was *Disimulation*, the other *Jews*, says he, *dissembled with him*; yea, *Barnabas also was carried away with their Disimulation*, Vers. 13.

The *Feasting on Sacrifices in Gentile Temples*, was of received and settled Signification in those Days, and externally Professed the *Worship of those Idols*. But when Refusal grew dangerous, several, whose heart did not go along in the *Worship*, yet complied, for worldly Safety, in this outward Profession, and met at the Feast. These Persons, in their Minds, thought || *an Idol nothing*:

1 C. 8. v. 4.
As. 10. 19.

thing: and when they came to *Feast in the Idols-Temple*, their Heart was only to Feast, not to Worship; so they were not Worshipers in Heart and Intention. But yet, joyning in this known Profession of Worship, they would be judged by their visible Professions, not invisible Intentions, and Condemned as Worshipers. For they that are present, and joyn in these Feasts, saith the Apostle, *have Fellowship with Idols*, 1 Cor. 10. 10, 21.

6. And Lastly, *These False Appearances*, and *Deceitful Seeming to Do like others in an ill thing*, when in a Dangerous Time, that seems necessary to save our Selves; was particularly Declared against, in the *Condemnation of the Libellatici*. Against whose insincere Arts, the Good Fathers, and Holy Bishops, shewed so much honest Zeal and Christian Simplicity, at *Rome, Carthage*, and other Places, in the *Primitive Times*.

What the Persecutors required of the Poor Christians, was to *Curse Christ*, and *Sacrifice to Idols*. This, tho they could not bring themselves to do in Reality; yet several, that were over-timorous, fell to make appearance, as if they had done it, when in truth they had not, by Deceitful Shifts and Artifices. That passing commonly for such as had sacrificed; they might, if Prisoners, get a present Release, and stop the vulgar from informing against them, and bringing them into further Troubles. And this was, * *per nefarios Libellos*, by *Libels, Certificates, or Tickets*, Granted by the Magistrate for that Purpose.

*Ep. Cleri
Rom. ap.
Cyp. Ep. 30.*

Some, tho they would not go and sacrifice openly, and in sight of the Heathens; would sub-

scribe a Profession, that they were Worshipers of Mars, Jupiter, or other Heathen Deities; and offer, or send it themselves to the Magistrate, thereby to obtain his Discharge. And these, † say the Clergy of Rome, in their Epistle to S. Cyprian, are as Guilty, and to be censured as severely, as if they had indeed gone to the wicked Altars; because, tho' falsely, they professed and testified, that they did go thither.

† -*Quo non minus, quam si ad nefarias aras accessissent, hoc ipso quod ipsum contestati fuerant, tenerentur*, ap. Cyp. Ep. 30. Ed. Ox.

Others, a little more tender, would not begin these Libels, and Promote them themselves: but yet they would be willing to accept the Benefit thereof, if sent in to them, either by the Favor of the Magistrate, or Procurement of their Friends. And these also they condemn, having writ, as they || tell Cyprian, against those also, that accepted fecissent, that is, as * Rigaltius notes, had accepted of such false Libels, when sent in to them. By which acceptance, adds he, they did ratifie what was contained therein. Which was, that on such a Day, such an one went into the Capitol, and burnt incense to Jupiter.

|| *Ibid.*
* *Annot. in loc.*

Some of these, were concerned so far, as to give order for Procuring these Certificates and Discharges: sending in sometimes, a Gentile Friend, or Servant, to Sacrifice, and ejure Christ in their Place. Which being accepted, by an indulgent, or corrupted Magistrate; they got a Certificate, or Libel, from him in the others Name, to protect him against Informers, or if in Custody, to procure his Release. But concerning these, † he is not free from the Guilt, say they, that ordered the

† *Non est immunis à scelere, qui ut fieret impetravit. ib.*

the evil thing to be committed. * Tho he was not * Licet present in person, when his Friend subscribed for him; Praesentes yet was his ordering that Subscription, tantamount to cum fierent non his Presence at it. When the other did it for him, affuissent, saith || S. Cyprian, he did therein Profess to Do it cum praehimself. That Libel is a Profession of a Denyer; it is a sentiam Christians Testimony, that he renounces his Christianity. suam utique ut scriberetur mandando fecissent. Ib. Ep. 30. || -Fecisse se dixit, quicquid alius faciendo commisit--Et illa Professio Denegantis; Constellatio Christiani, quod fuerat, abnuentis. Cyp. de Lapsis, p. 133. Ed. Ox.

Others stuck at this Procurement. But yet, if either the forwardness of a Friend, by Sacrificing for them, as I have hinted; or the Favor of a Peed and Corrupted Magistrate, would procure them such a Libel and Certificate, without their knowledge, or intermeddling in it; they would Consent to take the Benefit thereof, and to have it publicly read, and pleaded for their Discharge in Court. But to these, says the forecited Epistle, *† Nec est alienus à Crimine, cuius Consensu, licet non à se admissum Crimen, tamen publice legitur.* *† Neither is he free from the Crime, tho himself did not commit it, if he Consent for his own Benefit, to have it pleaded in his Name, and Publickly read in Court.* ap. Cyp. Ep. 30.

Thus early, did the Christians Fears and Necessities, put them upon feigned Shews, and insincere Compliances, with ill things; making a false Shew of Doing, what really they neither did, nor durst do. And thus were their hypocritical Appearances, and ungodly Evasions, rebuked and censured by the holy Zeal, and downright Honesty and Simplicity, of the Primitive Fathers. To appear to the World, as obeying an

¶ *Qui vult
videri pro-
positis ad-
versus E-
vangeli-
um, vel E-
dictis, vel
Legibus
satisfecif-
se, hoc ip-
so jam pa-
ruit, quod
videri pa-
ruisse se
valuit. ib.
* Ibid.*

unlawful Edict, was equally scandalous to Religion in the Eyes of Men, as if really they had been obedient to it. And therefore they rated such external Seemers and Appearers, as Real Observers. ¶ *He that would seem, say they, to have satisfied any Edict, that enjoyns a thing against Religion; in that very thing pays Obedience to it, that he studies to be thought obedient.* When called to own a Truth, by openly Refusing what we hold a Sin to Practise: * *Qui fallaces in excusatione prestigias quærit, negavit.* He that seeks to make the Imposer believe he doth what is required, and falls to fallacious Tricks, and cozening Compliances in Excuse, Denies his Duty, as if he had Done what he required him, was their Judgment, as I noted before. And this must hold alike, in all Duties. For if any thing is a real Wickedness; greater, or less, alters the Case betwixt it and any other, only as to Degrees. But, if such False Seemings, are really partaking in ill and hypocritical Shews, as appears from the preceding Instances; we may no more Partake, or act an hypocritical Part, in a less, than we may in a greater Wickedness.

By all which, I think it sufficiently appears, that all we can expect, in such external Observances of Significant Days, or other things, is to pass for Hypocrites and Dissemblers with God and men; if we say we do not mean what such Meeting doth, and as we thereby profess. Or, to be taken to Do the thing, which we in heart Condemn, from our having Done that, which is the outward Profession of it. We Do in Moral Estimate, what we Do visibly, and what we would be

be thought to Do. So that how little soever the Heart goes along therewith; if we appear among the Practisers of an ill thing, and Do as they, who are for it in outward Profession and Observance; we shall be censured among them, and being found in their way, must expect to share in their Condemnation.

I know 'tis said by some, when they do not answer the Signification of these Assemblies, that they join only at the innocent Parts of the Service there Performed, and pass over what comports not with their Consciences. Which Palliation, and Excuse, for what is wrong; makes many innocent and well meaning Minds, who would Neglect no opportunity of serving God, to resort thither, for the sake of all that is Good and Right in the Service, on such Occasions. But they consider not, that the things they are afraid to promote, or joyn in, are Signified and Declared, by the very Meeting; and not only by some particular Prayers, which are put up there. And in coming to such an Assembly, they profess to have what it means, by their Appearance, as well as by some Passages in the Prayers. The Edict that calls them thither, fixes a Signification, and tells them for what purpose. And their coming upon that Summons, is a Profession of setting on that Purpose. Thus it would be thought in any Case, where Men are invited and called in by their Friends, to seek a Blessing from God, on some Conspiracies, or hazardous Undertakings. Tho then, there would be some good Confessions of Sin, and other ordinary Devotions, to fit them for more Prevalence, and to accompany those

Prayers which are more special for the Design yet must all, who appear there on such an invitation, expect to be judged, both by God and men, as Parties with them therein. And thus, as I have observed, in all the foregoing Instances: there is a Signification and Profession, in the very Act or Observance it self.

And this, I think, makes the Case of joyning in these Assemblies, Different, as to this Point, *viz.* of *professing contrary to our Sentiments*; from that of *our joyning in the Daily Service of the Church*, tho' that happen to have some Passages which we cannot in Conscience joyne with, if those Passages are otherwise tolerable, on account of *their Unlawfulness*. For the intent, and signification of our Meeting in the daily Devotions, is not to profess a determinate Approbation and Concurrence in these scrupled Passages; but for Devotion at large. We come to them, to do God Honor and Service, and to seek Supplies for all our own, and others Necessities. So that our Presence there, is to concur in the Religion of the Day, or Devotion in the just Latitude thereof. And it cannot be gathered, merely from our being there, or Presence alone, that we are for these scrupled Passages; since, were we against them, we might still be there for so many other Purposes: but from *some other external sign*, or saying *Amen* to them still as they come.

But now, as for these other Assemblies, the thing stuck at is signified, not only by some particular Passages in the Form, but by the *whole Meeting*. And accordingly, our Concurrence therein is professed, not only by our saying *Amen*

at

at such Passages, but by our Appearance at the Meeting. The Day it self is instituted for that Design: it is the next or ultimate End of all that is then done, which, first or last, is for speeding, and carrying of it on.

Indeed, it highly concerns men, to look to the Matter and End of their Prayers; that they be for good things, and to set on none, but good Designs. To pray for ill ones, is to make our selves Parties to them, and to partake in Guilt and Punishment, with the Actors themselves. *If any come, that brings not this Doctrine, bid him not God speed, saith St. John; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds, 1 Joh. 10. 11.* Where we cannot with a safe Conscience assist, we cannot pray; for Success is more from Providence, than from humane Means; and therefore Prayers are among the highest and most valuable Assistances. To lend Prayers to ill things, is not only to assist and partake in the ill; but to prophane and pollute those most Sacred things, our Prayers themselves, and turn them into the rankest abominations. For any ill, or forbidden thing, is never so abominable to God and all good men, as when it is not only against God, but offer'd to him. When it creeps into our very Prayers, and stains and pollutes them, which should be pure, as the God they are offer'd to, and purge away all our other Pollutions. Which is, as much as in us lyes, not only to disobey and provoke, but to ruffle God's own Holiness, to tempt him to our Sins, to try if we can make him a Party to our Wickedness, and draw him in to be as deep

deep in any unjust, ungodly, or otherwise forbidden thing, as our selves; than which it is not easie to conceive, what can be a greater Abomination. Prayers, are among the plainest and greatest Expressions of Piety, when put up for good things; but, when pressed to procure, or speed on ill ones, they become themselves a grand Impiety, the vilest Prostitution of the most Sacred things, and so many horrible Prophanations.

But the Effect of all this, must only be to make men consider well, the lawfulness of the things, or ends, they set on by their Prayers, their Fastings, or Thanksgivings. If they are appointed only for what is good, they are an excellent means of Success, as well as Ministry of Religion. But if in any Case, men see they are pressed to ill purposes; there they must not pretend to comply with, or meet at them. The very Meeting, for what they cannot pray, or assist in, is but in the Presence, and House of God, to mock both him and their Brethren; and shews not so much of Devotion, as of sinful Fear, Hypocrisie, or Dissimulation.

Thus, is it the Care of true *Christian Simplicity*, not to *decieve*, or tell a Lye in Actions, more than by *False Speeches and Expressions*. It will neither falsifie in Words, nor Practice. It is not for declaring and professing that in Deeds, which we never think of in our Hearts: being equally against that, whether it be Word or Action, which is equally deluding. *Deceit* is the thing, which it seeks to shun: as St. Paul intimates, when he opposes, *speaking the Word of God, as of Sincerity; to Corrupting*, or, as 'cis in the Margin, *Dealing*

with it deceitfully, 2 Cor. 2. 17. And, as S. * Chrysostom notes, when he explains, *not in worldly Wisdom*, that is there opposed to *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, by *τέτυται ἐκ ἐν ἀμάρτιᾳ*, i. e. *not deceitfully*. Chrysost. in 2 Cor. 1. 12. And Deceit, may be brought about as effectually by Carriage, as by Words and Expressions, which therefore Simplicity takes care to prevent in both.

I add, lastly, upon this Point, as it will not stoop, either by Word or Deed, to utter Lyes itself: So, neither will it make use of others Falshoods, or have the like done by them, for its Advantage. Under the sharp Tryals, and pressing Necessities of the Primitive Persecutions, the *Libellatici* had got a Trick, as I observed, by bribing and corrupting the Officers of Courts, to buy Certificates, of their having done Sacrifice to Idols, when, in truth, they had not. This was a very false and wicked Artifice, against the Practice of Truth, and the Spirit of Confessors, shewing too little care of the Honour of God, and Religion, or of their Brethrens Souls, and too much of their own Dangers. And accordingly, as I have shewn, fell under the just Censures of the Church, in the Primitive Times.

* Hom. 3. in 2 Ep. ad Cor. p. 557. Ed. Savil.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. SECT. II.

Of Christian Simplicity and Sincerity.

2. **A** Second thing, implied in that Christian Simplicity, which Spiritual Prudence enjoins, is *Singleness, without double Dealings*. This is one thing, which the Scripture notes by Simplicity. *Servants*, says St. Paul, *obey in all things your Masters in the flesh; not with Eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in ἀπλότης, in Simplicity of heart* i. e. as our Translation renders it, *in singleness of heart*; not having one heart or mind to you at work, whilst their eye is over you, and another when 'tis off you, Col. 3. 22. And accordingly *Craftiness* or *worldly Wisdom*, which is opposite to Simplicity, and made so by St. Paul, 2 Cor. 12. is sometimes set off by *Duplicity*. *Hæc eadem Duplicitas*, this same Duplicity, says St. † Gregory the Great, speaking of the *Wisdom of this World*, which he makes the opposite to the Simplicity of the *Just*, Job 12. 4. And *non versantes in astutia* not walking in Craftiness, 2 Cor. 4. 2. St. * Chrysostom explains by *καὶ ἀπλόως ἡμᾶς ἐχούτες*, i. e. being free from all Duplicity, and really being such as we seem to be.

† *Expos.*
Mor. l. 10.
c. 16. in
cap. 12.
Job.

* *In loc.*
Homil. 8.
in 2 Cor.
p. 593. Ed.
Savil.

Truth is but one, and always the same; but Falshood is various and multiform. And as there is this Singleness in Truth it self: so should there always be, in the exhibitions or appearances, which we make thereof. Our inward thoughts, and outward appearance, betwixt which Moral

Truth

Truth lies, must bear its Picture and Character,
 having but one stamp, or being all of a piece.
 And this, Simplicity secures; preventing any
 discrepancy between our Minds and Expressions,
 or our having two Faces, more than Truth it self
 has. It allows us not to have one thing in our
 own Breasts, and to make shew of another to
 our Neighbour. To give out this for true at one
 time; and, as that happens to serve our Turn,
 the contrary to be as true at another. This is
 not to be the same man within and without; 'tis
 not to be one and the same to morrow, which it
 was to day; but is the sustaining of a twofold
 Person. Whereas Singleness excludes all Dupli-
 city; it can be but one. And accordingly Sim-
 plicity, which lies in maintenance of such Sin-
 gleness, must be and shew but one thing, and al-
 ways say and seem the same. In the Question
 of true or false, good or evil, it must not be va-
 rious, according to difference of times and pla-
 ces; and Favour or Dislike, Desire or Fear,
 help or obstruct the same thing, as a Truth or
 Error, Vice or Virtue, as it differently serves,
 or hinders our Convenience. This is not to
 shew Simplicity to be and appear one, and al-
 ways the same, or of a single heart. But is plain-
 ly to act a double Part; yea, perhaps, innume-
 rable Parts, such a man being like to change his
 Part, as oft as there is occasion for it.

This Singleness is much the same with *Unmix-
 edness* or *Purity*, which is another thing the Scri-
 pture means by *Simplicity*. Thus St. Paul warn-
 ing the *Corinthians* against the *false Apostles*, ex-
 presses his Fear, *lest by them their minds should be*
corrupted

corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 3. The Corruption endeavour'd by the false Apostles, was the bringing into Christianity Foreign Tenets, some Philosophical and Heathen, some Jewish Opinions. And so, to preserve the Simplicity that is in Christ, against this; is to preserve the Purity and Unmixedness of the Genuine Christian Doctrines. And this the Apostle did, that having espoused them to him, as a Husband, he might be able to present them a chaste Virgin to Christ, v. 2. He had espoused them to him, to learn of him alone, as their sole Master. And this Espousal, as a chaste Bride, she would keep inviolate, in admitting of no opposite Doctrines from a Foreign hand, or going to learn of any other. Thus also, when he bids us that giveth, to do it with Simplicity, i. e. with pure and unmixt intention, merely for Charity, not for Self-Ends or Vain-Glory, Rom. 12. 8. *Nam aliorum captans Gloriam, sed ejus qui indiget inopem subveniens.* Not doing it to win Glory, but to relieve his poor Brothers necessity, as † Theodoret comments. Thus also is that of our Saviour, If thine eye be single or simple, ἀπλῆς, thy whole body shall be full of light: by the singleness of the Eye, which guides and directs us, noting the Purity of Conscience and Intentions, not mixed or corrupted by impure Affections, Mat. 6. 22. Luk. 11. 34. And St. Peter's * sincere milk of the Word, is the same unadulterate, or not having any thing else mixt with it, 1 Pet. 2. 2. Agreeable to this, is St. Basil's Explication, who to the Question, What is sincere? Answers, || I account that to be sincere

† in loc.

* ἀδολον
γάλα.

|| εἰλικρινές
λογιον.

ζομαι εἶναι τὸ ἀμικτός, καὶ ἀκρῶς καθαροῦτον ἀπὸ παντὸς ἐναιμί.
Basil. in Reg. Brev. Interrog. 264. p. 716.

which is unmixt, and perfectly purified from all that † εἰλικτε-
 is contrary to it. And that of Guidas, εἰλικτενὲς, or νὲς, τὸ κα-
 sincere, is that which is pure, and unmixt with any δαδὲν καὶ
 other. And Theophylact, who on Phil. 1. 10. ex- αἰμῶν ἐ-
 pounds, that ye may be sincere *, by ἵνα μηδὲν νόθον * Theoph,
 ὅψωμαι, &c. or, that ye may receive no spurious Tenes P. 581.
 under the pretext of Charity.

And this also is another Part of Simplicity, to
 be pure from all Adulteration, or mixture of the con-
 trary. 'Tis an expression of the singleness there-
 of, not to have one end in Truth, but another
 in Appearance; and not to pretend much con-
 cern in a thing to serve others, when really it
 is most to gratifie and serve our selves. And so
 'tis too, to preserve our Thoughts and Affections
 clean, and not to suffer them to be undermined,
 or corrupted, by their Contraries. Not to have
 our Love of God, for instance, adulterated by
 the intermixture of worldly Love, which, in any
 Competition, will secretly draw us from his Ser-
 vice for this World's sake. Nor our Fear of him,
 twisted with our Fear of men; or our Love of
 our Neighbour, with Love of our selves, and
 seeking thereby our own Self-Ends; or, our
 Designs of good Actions, with Designs of Vani-
 ty and Applause; or our Pursuits of Publick
 Good, with the Pursuit of Private Passions; or
 our Pretences for Religion, with intentions for
 our selves. Under this mixture, of such oppo-
 site Passions and Intentions, we are not single,
 and all of a Piece. And which is worse, that fair
 side, which is uppermost, and openly given out,
 is weakest: and the contrary, which is mingled
 therewith, and lurks under it, when it comes to
 the

the Tryal, is like to prevail over it. This is being, as one thing which appears, so another which appears not : and so, not being single in what it shews, but divided or twofold.

Now, as for this Singleness, or Unmixedness of Simplicity, it excludes our being of a double Heart or Mind, of a double Tongue, or of a double Practice.

I. First, *It excludes our being of a double Mind or Heart.*

It allows not of a double Mind, or of a Duplication of Thought, or Intention. We must not profess or seem, for instance, to think what we do not think ; or to believe a thing, whilst we see no Reason to believe it, or much Cause to believe otherwise ; or not to see what is made plain to us, because it makes against us ; or to be ignorant of what we very well know, because we have no mind to acquit our selves, or act according to our Knowledge. We must not put on an appearance of Conscience for, or against any way, when it has no hold upon our Conscience, and our Zeal, either for or against it, is not really on account of Conscience, but of Profit and mere humane Affections ; or pretend to scruple a disgustful thing, only when we have no mind to do it ; or are satisfied in Conscience of a profitable or pleasing one, tho we cannot act it without Regret, and till frequent cursing has made it silent, without our Conscience striking in our Faces. We must not give out Intentions, of what we never design ; or pretend one thing, whilst we intend another ; seem to be actuated by Zeal for God, or Religion, when 'tis all

most, for sensual Passion, or Secular Design; or for the Publick, when 'tis for some private end; or for the Love of Goodness, when 'tis for the sake of Vanity, or the Love of Applause; or for Fear of God, when 'tis only for fear of suffering; or to serve our Neighbour, when 'tis only to serve our selves of him. These, and such like, are not to preserve a Simplicity, or Singleness, of Thoughts and Intentions; but to have them of two sorts, one within, and another without us. To be *double*, or of *two Souls*, as St. James speaks, *Jam. 1. 8.* who calls upon such *Double-minded*, to *purifie their hearts*, or to change those corrupt Mixtures, for purity and singleness of Thoughts and Intentions, *Ch. 4. 8.* And is contrary to that *Purity of Intention*, our Saviour and St. Paul require, when they injoyn us, to have *one Eye or Intention single*, and to *give with Simplicity*, i. e. a Design, not of *Vain-glory*, but of *Charity*, as I noted before.

Yea, it forbids, as being thus of *two Forms*, or double in our Thoughts and Intentions of any thing, *at the same time*: So, of appearing double and divided, in our Thoughts and Intentions, about true or false, good and evil, if taken at different times. For Truth and Virtue, are unchangeable things, and the same at all times. What they are to day, they will be to morrow, and every day; and not chop and change, as our Humor, Interest, or Convenience doth.

To preserve this Singleness then, we must add Constancy to Truth, and be the same for it, at all times and places. *Wa be to the Sinner*, says the *Son of Sirach*, threatening the impatient and un-
 K believing

believing Temporizers, *that go two ways*, Eccles. 2. 12. If we see a thing to be true, when it makes for us; we must see it as true, when it comes to make against us. If it is matter of Conscience, when it advances; it must be matter of Conscience still, when it afflicts or depresses us. If it was not plain, whilst we lost by it; it must not presently become plain, when we are to profit by it: if it were not to be seen, whilst it served others; it must not be more manifest, and discernable to our sight, when it comes to serve our selves. If it be our Intention to serve God, we must intend to serve him, when we are called to suffer for him, as well as when to reign by him. If to stick to the Rules of an holy Religion, and to be the Lovers and Followers of any Virtue; then, when it is a losing, and persecuted, as well as when it is a getting Virtue, when 'tis vulgarly decryed, as well as when it is applauded and cryed up. If to be just and charitable to our Brethren: then, when we have, as well as when we want the opportunity, of shewing forth our Justice and Charity; when thereby we only serve them, as well as when we serve our own Ends by serving theirs; when the World knows not, as well as when it knows what we do, and when it can only serve the Purposes of Charity and Justice, as well as when, together with them, it serves also the End of Credit and Popular Applause.

This Constancy, in the same true Thoughts and good Purposes, is necessary to maintain and keep up this Singleness of our Minds, not only at some one, but at different times, and under the several

several

several Changes and Turns of worldly Temptation and Convenience. Without this, when our mind is single at any time, and in the right, it would not be stable and steadfast therein; but on any Change, of Humor, or Advantage, put on a different Form, and appear quite another thing. Which is to have two Minds, or two Consciences, Beliefs, and Intentions; suited to two different times. And this *Inconstancy* and *Inhabitability*, St. James particularly taxes in the *St. James*, or *Double Souled* Persons. *A Double minded man, saith he, is unstable in all his ways, Jam. 1. 8.*

Again, this *Singleness* allows not, as of a *Double mind*, against *Duplicity of Thought and Intention*; so neither of a *Double heart*, against *Duplicity of Will and Affection*. It never seems to be pleased, with what is displeasing to it; or to have a good Will to a thing, when it bears an ill Will against it; or to go willingly and by Choice in a Business, where it goes against its Will, and merely in Submission. It doth not appear to love what it really hates; or to admire what inwardly it slight and contemns: to be thankful or glad of that, which truly gives it sorrow, and is a trouble to it; or to be sorry, and afflict it self for a thing, when really it rejoiceth at it: to desire, or pray for any Event, when its Heart is aversè thereto, and flies from it; or to hope for any issue, which within it self it fears; or to fear any, which in very deed it covets. It is no Part or Proof of this Singleness, to pretend we have given up our Wills to God's, when we will not rest under his Will in any unpleasing Case, but make our own Wills take place of his; or our Heart

to God and Religion, when 'tis not so much to him, as to this World, nor is tyed so fast to the Duties of Religion, as to the worldly Conveniences and Advantages about Religion. Or to pretend, that we love God above this World, when our Hearts are ready to sin against God, to save the things of this World; or that our chief Care and Concern, is for the Joys of Heaven, when we are ready to go out of any way that leads thither, to keep what we have here on Earth; or that our Heart is in the first place to keep Innocence, when it will chuse rather to sin than suffer, and is not so much for keeping innocent, as keeping safe. And these, and such like, shew not a single, but a double Heart. One, in Pretence and Appearance, and another in Reality and Truth; one, that is for God and a good thing, and another that can be as much against them: which are quite opposite to Simplicity, and *Singleness of Heart*.

Or, if our Heart is truly affected to good and ill, as it shews, and but one way at once; yet would it be a double Heart still, if it is not constant in these Affections whilst there is the same Cause, but double and divided, now one way, and anon another, if taken at *different times*. As it is, when we love any virtuous ways or things, whilst they serve our Turn, and grow averse to them, as soon as that Turn is served: set much by them, whilst they suit our Ends, but are set as much against them, when once they begin to oppose them. In a word, seem pleased or offended, love or hate, hope or fear, slight or admire, desire or turn away from

from the same things; being now all for them, and then all against them, according as they suit our uncertain Turns, or Interests. When we do thus by any Truths, or Virtues, we have not one single Affection, for the ways we would be thought to approve; but are sometimes on, and sometimes off. Our Hearts are not at unity with themselves, nor true and constant to their own Motions: So that no hold is to be taken of us, and men know not where they will have, and where they will miss of our Hearts. And this is not to shew Simplicity, but *Double heartedness*. An Heart, as to love, so to hate the same thing, at different times: that goes not all one way, but on different Turns, not of the things, but of our own Convenience and Affairs, is contrarily affected towards them. An Heart in shew, that is set on the Goodness, or Truth, of the things themselves; but in Reality, on our own Interests, under that Cover, and serving of our selves by them. Which plainly is harboring of a *Double Heart*: and betrays us unavoidably into the *going two ways*, threatened by the Son of Sirach; and into that *instability*, which St. James condemns in the *Double-minded*. Like as also the Scripture says of the men of Zebulun, who came over to David without any hankering after, or Reserves for the House of Saul: that they were not of a double heart, 1 Chron. 12. 33. Or, as 'tis expressed v. 38. that they came to him to Hebron, with a perfect heart. And this Duplicity, or Division of Heart in any Duties, is opposite to that Integrity of heart, which God requires in his Service.

vice. Telling us, that in the way of his Commandments, *we must love and serve him with all our heart*, Deut. 10. 12. Mar. 12. 30. and *walk before him with a perfect heart*, 1 King. 8. 61. Isa. 38. 3.

2. Secondly, This Singleness of Simplicity, excludes our being of a double Tongue, against Duplicity of Talk and Expression. Neither at any time used we flattering words, courting your Favour by speaking pleasing things, more agreeable to your Humor, or Necessities, than to our own Sentiments, says St. Paul, setting off his own Simplicity and sincere Dealing among the Thessalonians, 1 Thess 2. 5. It is not for speaking one thing to a mans Face, and another behind his back; for talking one way in publick, and the quite contrary in private, or among those who are of the same Judgment; for talking still as the Company doth, owning all as right, and assenting to quite contrary Discourses, as it falls in Company contrarily affected in the matters discoursed of. It doth not speak differently of the same things, only as that differently happens best to suit our Purposes, as if there were nothing in the celebrated Names, of true and false, good and ill; but our Convenience. It doth not commend a thing, for instance, when we are about to sell, and disparage it when we come to buy it; or cry up a thing as a Virtue, when it serves our selves, and condemn it as a Vice, when it serves others; or give out the same thing, as mere Necessity, if done by us when we are over others, which we accused as malicious infringement and intolerable Usurpation, when others

did it whilst over us. It will not magnifie Moderation, when we are down, and stand in need thereof; and speak against it as loathsome Lukewarmness, or Treacherous Neutrality, when we get up, and are in Place to shew it. Nor condemn justly all Bloody, Persecuting, Injurious, and Despoiling Zeal in Papists; and yet not condemn, but justifie our selves, when we feel our Spirits fermenting with the same Bitterness.

This, and such like, is to have two Tongues: one in our own Case, and another in our Neighbours. One, behind a mans back, and another before his Face. One, in this Company, and another in that, as may best please each. Which is the *Double Tongue*, against which, as I noted, St. Paul cautions *the Deacons*: who, especially if of complying Natures, would be in danger to say one thing to one, and another thing to another, to please the different Affections of those they talked withal, when employ'd, as they often were, to go *from house to house*, 1 Tim. 3. 8. And is also *the flattering Lip* in the Psalmist, which, saying that to ones Face which the heart never thinks, and which it would be ready to gainsay in the next convenient place, he calls *speaking with a double heart*, Psal. 12. 2. It is to have one Tongue to the World, for Fear, to avoid Persecutions, as the *Gnosticks* had; and another in Truth, and privately towards God, or where they might profess their Sentiments in Religion, without hazard. Which *double Dealing* of theirs, St. James may not unlikely refer to, when he says, *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*, Jam. 1. 8.

To this of a *Double Tongue*, I shall also refer, as *speaking thus differently in different Speeches*; so likewise all *Double meaning*, or *speaking Doubtfully and Deceitfully*, in the same Speech. Such are, all speaking with *Mental Reservations*, when we only utter part of our Meaning in words, and secretly Reserve the other part still unuttered in our Minds: which part of the Speech reserved in our Minds, if added to what is expressed in words, would make it quite a different thing, to what it sounds. And use of *Equivocations*, which design to delude by a Double sense of some words: or of *Ambiguities*, i. e. like Double meaning, by the doubtful and uncertain Construction of whole Sentences, which, without any violence to Rules of Grammar, may be expounded quite different ways. And, lastly, all *Craftiness*, and *ways of Trepaning in Discourses*; either by talking in the Clouds, and casting a Mist of words, to make a thing unintelligibly obscure and dark, when we are afraid lest another should see and understand it. Or, by *contrived Circumlocution* and *Round of Words*, laying Trains by degrees, to draw those we talk withal imperceptibly into wrong Apprehensions. For men use to go about, when they tell a Lye, and yet would be thought to speak a Truth. They stand off at a distance from the Point, and are not for answering plainly, and directly to it. They break the Falshood to pieces, and cast a multitude of Words, that in the Crowd something wrong may get in among others that are right, without being seen or suspected. So that what they could not put off by Whole-Sale, they retail

retail out among other Ware, and vent by Piece-meal, without being discover'd by the abused Parties. Nay, perhaps, by these Arts, they have cozen'd themselves first, and then their Neighbours. They may have hid, or lost the Falshood by this means, and not know well in what part of the Discourse to find it themselves. And thus, the Lye broken to pieces, and flurr'd off, is easily swallow'd, and goes down without Regret; which, had they utter'd it plainly, would have almost choaked them, and bore too hard upon their Consciences.

Now all these ways, of *Mental Reservations*, *Equivocations*, *Ambiguities*, and *crafty Speeches and Discourses*; are using a *Double Tongue*. Their End is to abuse the Apprehensions and Belief of men, by a deceitful Sign; against the Faith of Society, and the End of all Discourse and Conversation. For Words, are the Instrument of Faith and Confidence; and therefore should be sound, as they may be relied on. But what St. James taxes in the *Double-mind*, is equally true of this *double Tongue*: as that is so unstable in all its ways, so is this in *all its Meanings*, that they are not to be built upon, *Jam. 1. 8.* They are the Instruments of *Hypocrisie*, or of mens dissembling their own Thoughts; and of *Guile*, or of their beguiling and abusing other mens; and we are to *lay aside all guiles, and hypocrisies*, 1 Pet. 2. 1. to be, as our Lord testified Nathanael was, such true Israelites, in whom is no guile, Joh. 1. 47. or, as he himself was, of whom it was said, that no guile was found in his mouth, 1 Pet. 2. 22. The Use they serve, and the End they propose, is not

not to inform, but to deceive others: So they are the Ways and Expressions, not of a true, but of a deceitful Tongue. They carry with them, not a *single*, but a *double* Meaning: and so bear in them all the Force and Effect of a double Tongue, which speaks twice, and two contrary things, at one time.

3. *Thirdly*, This Singleness of Simplicity, excludes a double Practice, against Duplicity in Life and Carriage. It will not allow us to be open Saints, and secret Sinners; to practise one thing before God, and another before the World; to be one thing at Church, and another in our own Closets. It will not permit us to worship God, and to worship Baal; to comply still with the Worship of the Place, tho in things of direct Repugnance betwixt themselves, going one day, with the *Gnosticks*, to the *Jewish Synagogues*, and the next to the *Heathen Temples*, and the third to the *Christian Churches*. Or, to be for a man in the Crowd, and against him in a trusty Company; to profess we are for one, and yet act against him; or wish and act for him, when in private, or left to our selves, and yet turn over from him in the Eye of the World, and renounce him in Profession; to appear among those, that meet to pray for a thing at Church, which we cannot pray for, but, it may be, pray against when we are by our selves; to go among the Rejoycers in Publick, for what we mourn in Private; or among those that afflict themselves, and mourn abroad, for what we rejoyce at home. It will not be for the Practice of Duty in the Sun-shine, and against it in Persecution, as the *Gnosticks*, who,

who, as St. James says, were *unstable in their ways*, sticking to *Christian Assemblies* in opportunities of Peace, and turning to those of *Jews or Gentiles* in Fear of Persecutions: *Denying thus*, as the * Apostle says, *the Lord that bought them*, * 2 Pet. 2. 1. when they could not otherwise save themselves, tho confessing him at other times. It doth not use, when a Virtue is cryed up, to be at the top of those who stickle for it; but when cryed down, to hide its head among those that do not know it. To encourage and run up a way, whilst it serves our selves; but to brow-beat and run it down, when it disservices us, or serves others. To set off the obligation of Duty to Superiors, whilst they go our way, and are for us; but to be silent of them, or shake off Duty, when they go contrary: as if the Duties were not to go along with the Relations, but with our Interests and fleshly Purposes. To be all Kindness, whilst we get by men, or use them for our own Ends: but to cast them off, and set nothing by them, when we have served our selves of them.

By all these, and such like ways, instead of leading a Life uniform, and all of a Piece: we have two Lives, or a Life infinitely multiform and various, according to all the Variety, and turns of Convenience. Having one Life in time of Peace, and another in time of Persecution: one, when we come to get by a Duty; another, when we are call'd to lose by it: one Duty towards a man, whilst he pleases; but another, when he begins to displease us: one, at home; and another, abroad: one, when the Vogue is for a way; and another, when 'tis against it:
one,

one, whilst we have some Turns to serve; and another, when those Turns are served.

Now this is not to lead single Lives, but double, or treble; nay, to change as oft, as Humour, Accident, Ends, or Convenience doth. 'Tis to be true, and constant, indeed, to our own Humour, or Interests; but to nothing else. It is not to be true, to our own Professions and Pretences, to make our Lives true to themselves, or one part of them true to another. And as the Scripture calls them, *Lying and Deceitful Talkers*, who speak *Corde & Corde*, with an heart and an heart, as the Hebrew Phrase is: So are they equally *Lying and Deceitful Workers*, who live *Vita & Vita*, with a Life and a Life, i.e. are *Double Livers*. It is quite contrary to Simplicity; *Eye-service*, or having one Practice whilst the Master's Eye is over them, and another when it is off them, being directly contrary to *Service with Singleness of Heart*, as St. Paul notes in the Case of Servants, Eph. 6. 5, 6. 'Tis no shew of single, but of double Dealing: the instability in all his ways, or this Change and Mutability of Life and Practice, being the Mark St. James gives, of a *Double-minded man*, Jam. 1. 8. 'Tis to expose our selves to the *Woes*, which be-
long to the *Sinner that goes two ways*, as the Son

† Concio- of Sirach says, *Ecolus* 2. 12. And therefore this
ne 21. De Duplicity of Life and Manners, must never find
Prospera place in the Simplicity of Christians. But is that
Q Adver- *κακὴν ἑαυτοῦ*, or that wicked *Ver-satility* of man-
sa Fortu- ners, and *Dexterity* in accomodating it self to all
na. Et De Turns, whereby the Great St. † Basil lets off
Pruden- that evil sort of *Prudence*, which is most quick at
tia. Tom. 3. p. 582. *eloping*

displaying what is for its worldly Profit, and serves its Ends upon the Simple and Well-meaning by Deceit.

3. A third Thing implied in Christian Simplicity, is Openness in what it declares, or ought to profess, without Concealments, or close Reserves. This is another thing, which the Scripture understands by, and calls for in, this virtuous Simplicity. Thus, St. Paul opposes the Manifestation of the Truth, to bandling of the Word of God deceitfully. 2 Cor. 4. 2. By Manifestation of the Truth, is meant setting it forth with Openness, which would not suffer it any longer to lie hid, but make it manifest and apparent, to those he had to deal with. Yea, such Openness, as would commend them to every mans Conscience in the sight of God, i. e. such as every man must needs know was sufficient in his own Conscience, which, altho for Ends they may sometimes deny in this World, yet their Conscience must needs own and give Testimony to, when they come to be judged before God. Thus, when St. Paul alledges the Testimony of his Conscience, for his having lived in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, 2 Cor. 1. 12. St. Chrysostom on the Place explains it, * by Living with all liberty, and having nothing cover'd or obfuscated. In Simplicity, i. e. without any Hypocrite, or Cover, says † Photius. Thus, one thing in the Description of the Simplicity of the Just given by St. † Gregory the Great, is Sensum verbum aperire, to make its Speech or Expression lay open

† ἀνεκκάλυπτος τὸ ὁ λόγος ἀπαλυσμένης. In loc. ap. p. 599. † Lib. 10. c. 16. Expos. Moral. in Job, c. 12.

* Ἐν ἐλευθερίᾳ
πίσιν, ὅ
τι δὲ ἐχρη-
σάμενοι
Homil. 3.
in 2 Cor.
p. 558. Ed.
Savil.

OEcumen.

its meaning. According to all which, Cicero says *homo simplex & apertus*, and *aperta simplex*; meaning setting off Simplicity by Openness. And Hefychius explains, *εἰλικνέως sincere*, by *φανερῶς manifest* or open, as well as by *ἀδόλον undeceitful*.

By this Openness, we must not understand, an obligation to tell all a man knows, and to keep nothing secret. We must not disclose other men's Secrets, when they are intrusted with us. And no Good Christian will inform against a Good Man, or discover what he knows of him, to his Unrighteous Persecutors. Nay, he will not tell all he knows, or publish the Vices of ill men, when it serves no End, either of their own emendation, or giving others warning of them, but only to work their Shame and Prejudice. We are not to Proclaim all the Good we know by our selves, which would be Vanity and Ostentation. Nay, nor all the ill, as our Faults or Imperfections; which would be the way in time, to be regardless of Censure, and throw off all shame: and then, as the Scripture says, we should only *declare, or publish our Sin like Sodom*, Isa. 3. 9. We are not to make every one acquainted with our Business, or to divulge our own Projects and Designs, thereby to give them the trouble of our Cares, or to provoke malevolent Censures and Oppositions, but only as we are led thereto, in way of Friendship and Confidence, or to seek Advice, or for Information of those we are concern'd with, or other like reasonable and prudent Inducements. In these, and a Number of other like Cases, 'tis not the Part, either of a Good or wise man,

to be open and divulge all he knows; but to hide many things, and keep them secret. 'Tis a *Fool*, says the *wise Son of Sirach*, that *travails with a word, as a woman doth with a child*, till it be brought forth. Whereas *wise men*, are for *letting many things dye with them*, never fearing, as the other doth, lest a word pent up in their breasts, should burst them, *Ecclus. 19. 10, 11, 12.* As it is a *Vertue*, to shew openness of some things: So it is a *Vertue*, to shew taciturnity of others. There is a *time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak*, saith the *Preacher*, *Eccles. 3. 7.* Indeed, it is a Part of great Goodness, and Prudence, to know when to be silent, as well as when to speak; and to know, not only what can be said, but also what may better be omitted and left unsaid, in all Cases. So that to be open in every thing a man knows, and able to hold nothing; is not the openness of Simplicity here mention'd, which is a virtuous Disposition.

But this is, *in what a man is bound and ought to profess, there to be open.* Or, *where a man pretends or undertakes to inform others, and open his own Thoughts*, there to deal openly and frankly with them. Where we either voluntarily undertake to declare our Minds, or have a just Call, and ought to profess them: he that would lay Claim to this *Vertue*, must not hide his Opinions or Practice, his Desires or Espousals, but appear what he is. He must not use Subtlety in putting off, or concealing his inward Sentiments, especially under any opposite shews; but openness in professing them. Truth is naked,

ked, and not afraid to appear so. It shuns not to come into the Light, when call'd to it: It seeks not then to hide it self, but is free to own it self. As it always is, what it seems; so is it ready to seem, what it is. And such in all Points, which we pretend to declare, or ought to profess, should we be too.

Near akin to this of Openness, is Plainness, *opposite to amusing, or misleading Dress, of what a professor.* It sets off Truth, as it is in it self, not daubing it over with made Colours. It seeks not to huddle it up in intricacies, which would not lay it open, but hide it from mens Understandings. It doth not put things, or Actions, into any delusive, or fallacious Attire; which would serve only to make men misapprehend, and take them for other, than they are. It doth not amplify things, to make them be thought larger; nor aggravate, which is to make them seem faultier; nor palliate, which would have them appear more soft and innocent; nor any way disguise, which is to make them shew other than they are in reality. For all these, and such like, are not ways of Truth, but of Deception. They do not imprint on men, our own Apprehensions of things, but mistakes of them. They are not for making that plain to them, which we think; but that seem to them, which we think not; contrary to that Singleness, whereof I have already treated. Whereas Simplicity, is for being the same, as has been observed, both within, and without; in inward Sentiments, and in outward Manifestations. It seeks to be taken, only for what it is; and so never

never hides its own shape when call'd to make
new thereof; or assumes a borrowed one, in
hopes it would better become it.

*Fourthly and Lastly, A Fourth thing imply-
ed in Christian Simplicity, and prescribed by Spi-
ritual Prudence, is Harmlessness, or Innocence, op-
posite to all intending, or effecting wrong, or
harm to any Person. Of all other sorts of De-
ceit, it is most opposite to Dolus malus, or that
which works evil to other men. It is a Simpli-
city in Good, without any mixture of Evil in
it. It leaves us a Liberty, in fitting ways to de-
fend our selves; and, whilst it is without Sin,
a Prejudice to Religion, to use all wise Methods
of Caution and Wariness. But it takes from us
offensive Weapons, as Anger, Envy, Peevish-
ness, Revenge, Vexatiousness, all Violence and
Injustice. It casts out all hurtful, and injurious
Passions, and Practices: and that at such times,
as we are most tempted, and provoked to them.
For, when you are betrayed by Friends, persecuted
by Enemies, and hated by all, says our Lord, Mat.
10. 17, 18, 21, 22. When you are sent out, as
Lambs in the midst of ravenous Wolves, adds he,
teaching this Lesson of Prudent Simplicity, then
be ye as innocent as Doves, a Creature usually
held to be without Gall or Bitterness, to put it
upon working or returning Mischief, v. 16. He
commands thee, to use the Simplicity of the Dove,
says St. * Chrysostom upon the Place, to restrain * Homil.
thee from seeking Revenge when injured, or draw- 34. in
ing those that lay wait for thee, to Punishment. For Mat.
thy Prudence will stand thee in no stead, unless
this Simplicity be added to it. Be ye as simple as
Doves,*

L

† Incert
Author's
ap. Chry-
sostom. in
Mat.

Doves, to pardon injuries, † says another Ancient Comment; be as Serpents, to avoid apprehension; be as Doves, not to bite when once ye are apprehended. And the same, as both Chrysostom and he note, is signified by their being sent out, among the Wolves, as Sheep; thereby requiring of them in such times, as they say, *ovium mansuetudinem*, the mildness of those most patient Creatures. Thus when St. Paul bids Servants to obey with simplicity, or singleness of heart, Eph. 6. 5. Col. 3. 22. Theodoret takes ἀπλότης, as opposite to *εὐχολογία*, making Simplicity opposite to Malignity and Improbity. And St. Chrysostom expounds the Simplicity and godly Sincerity, 2 Cor. 1. 12. among other things, by ἐν ἀπώγειν γνώμῃ, or a Will void of all Mischievousness and Malignity.

Simplicity, is to be a patient Virtue, and to imply, as the Patience of Persevering; so likewise the Patience of Suffering. It looks more at the Duty, than the Danger, and is ready to take up the Cross, and bear it after Christ, when call'd thereto. It notes fixedness in Truth and Goodness, and must be accompanied with Fortitude or Fearlessness of Dangers, making Faith or Trust in God, its Support, when it has nothing visible to trust to in this World. As St. Paul did, still holding on his Simplicity, when he had the Sentence of Death in himself, and could have no Trust or Hope of Deliverance in himself, but in God who raiseth up the dead, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9, 10, 12.

Such is the Virtue of true Christian Simplicity, noting Veracity, without doing, or speaking Lyes; Singleness, without all counterfeit shews

double Dealings; *Openness*, without studied Concealment; and *Plainness*, without artificial or misleading Dress, of what we undertake to declare, or ought to profess; and *Harmlessness* or Innocence, patiently suffering, and perseveringly sustaining, what it receives from them, but not doing, or returning, the least wrong or violence to any Person. And all this is agreeable to S. Chrysostom's Description of it; who explaining those words of St. Paul, in godly Simplicity, 2 Cor. 1. 12. sets it off thus. || *We have* ||

nothing fraudulent, nothing by hypocrisie, or simulation, or flattery or assentation, nothing by treachery, or imposture, or other such like. But in all liberty, in Simplicity, in Verity, in a heart pure and free from all mischievousness and malignity, in a mind void of all deceit, having nothing cover'd up or shadowed over, nothing craftily varnish'd or rotten at heart under a fair and promising outside.

ἔδεν δὲ
λεεθὲν ἔχον
καὶ χει-
ρὸν, καὶ εὐ-
γνωσίαν, καὶ
κατακρίαν
ἐκ ἐμπε-
λῶ καὶ ἀ-
πίστου, καὶ
ἀλλοπιδίου
τοῦτων ἐ-
ν ἁπλῶ

ἐν εὐδοκίᾳ πίστι, ἐν ἀπλότῃ, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ἐν καρδίᾳ καὶ ἀπονήρῳ
καί, ἐν ἀδύλῳ διαγνῶσι, ἔδεν ἔχοντες συνεισπρασίαν ἔδεν ἁπλῶν.
Chrysost. in loc. Homil. 3. in 2 Ep. ad Cor. p. 558. Ed. Savil.

Thus, is Simplicity, such plain and downright Honesty, as begets no wrong belief of, or expectation from us; nor fails those, which it doth beget. That, as it doth not speak any false thing; so neither will it speak, nor act, any delusive thing; that makes no deceitful Reserves, nor seeks shifts or Evasions, nor affects to hide what it ought to make manifest, or disguise what it doth set off. If this Vertue governs any man, he will put on no Appearances

of what he is not, nor make a shew of what he doth not intend, nor seem to say or do what he doth not mean, nor willingly deceive by a dark, or doubtful, or delusive sign; nor seek to have any the worse by him, or mistaken in him, or to expect other, than what they are like to find from him.

And this *Simplicity*, St. Paul calls *Godly Sincerity*, or † *the Sincerity of God*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. This is, such a Simplicity, as will pass for Sincerity, in the sight of God. And such a Simplicity, is like the Simplicity of God himself: who is most true, without the least Falshood, in Word or Deed; Single, without Doubling and Crasie Winding; Open, without artificial Reserve, Shifts, or Evasions; Plain, without Disguise, Harmless, in all he doth or says; without the least Breach, of down-right Honesty, Innocence, and Truth, in every Word and Action. Such is the Simplicity of God himself. And, when we take care, to shew forth ours in the same ways; our Simplicity is like God's, and bears his Image. And as the Scripture calls upon us, † 1 Pet. 1. 16. || *to be holy, as God is holy*; and * Luk. 6. 36. *to be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful*: So is this way of Simplicity, *to be sincere as God himself is sincere*, which may very well, on that account, be stiled *the Sincerity of God*.

The Ground and Reason of this Simplicity, is *the Preservation of Equality*. To do as we † Mat. 7. *would be done by*, which, as our † Saviour says, *is the Law and the Prophets*, is the first Rule of Justice, and settles this Equality between all Persons. This is *to love our Neighbours as our selves*,

Mans; to let them stand on the same Bottom, and allow them, as being on the same Level, in all Intercourse and Dealing, to expect the like from us, as we do from them. And *this* *Neighbour*, is *every man*, wise or foolish, credulous or suspicious, rash or wary, rich or poor, who must all stand upon the same Level as to this matter.

Now, since all Communication and Intercourse, lies in signifying our minds to one another, by Words or Action: in regard there must be an Equality kept up, in the mutual Communication of Minds; there is need of this Virtue of Simplicity, which will do it equally to all Persons. *Faith*, is the Foundation of all Society, and Communication. And in this, there must be Equality, in the Ground it goes upon; every man having the same Ground to believe another, that another has to believe him. And this can be nothing, but Simplicity and plain-Dealing, which will equally secure the Faith, of wise and unwise, subtle and simple, quick and slow apprehensions. This Simplicity, is fit to inform all Understandings. But if we go off from this, instead of informing mens Minds and Belief, we shall abuse them. Or, if the subtle and wary, by suspense, preserve themselves from being deceived; we shall abuse, and deceive others. 'Tis only plain Dealing, that can secure any, and give the same Security to all, that where all have an equal Right, they may also have an equal Benefit. So that in Communication, we must use the same plainness towards every man, the young

and old, the unversed and experienced, the weak and strong: seeking what is equal towards every one, and what is private and unequal towards none; if we would keep to the Rule of Justice, and do Equity, which speaks the Observation of Equality, to all those we deal or converse with.

This is implied in S. Paul's Reason for speaking the truth every Man with his Neighbour, because we are members one of another, Eph. 4. 25. For, tho the Members be greater, or less than another, in point of Perception, Importance and Honor, yet, a more intelligent and discerning Member, doth not take Liberty to deceive, and impose upon a less discerning, more than the other doth of imposing upon it; but they are all equal and alike, in true and Plain-Dealing with each other.

|| In loc.

Hom. 14.

in Ephes.

* In loc.

† In loc.

The Eye, as S. || Chrysostom notes upon those words, as also * Theodorit, and † Theophylact, when it sees some ill a coming, doth not deceive the Foot, but gives true warning, that it may compose it self to Flight. And if the Foot, by Feeling, finds it upon unsure Ground, it makes true Discovery, tho the Eye saw it not. When the Smell has perceived the Quality of any Food, it doth not helpe it to the Palate. And when the Tongue has discovered a Taste, it doth not misrepresent it to the Stomach. And so all the other Members, are as careful, to represent things Right to their Fellow-Members, as their Fellows are, to Do the same to them. And one never seeks to deceive another, because, being mutually Members, they must needs have joint Interests; and when one deceives, or hurts another, it is *Dammum commune*, a common Damage.

Theodoris says; and therein it damnifies and hurts it self. So that the rash and the wary, the wise and the foolish, being equally Members; we must no more impose upon that, than the strong Eye doth upon the unseeing Fool. And, in their Communication, the wise must be as far, from seeking to deceive the unwary; as the unwary are, from seeking to deceive them.

This Simplicity, should be observed in all Communications. Especially among Christians, whose Credit should be so good, that their Word should never be questioned, but *yea and nay*, be that need to pass among them, as our Saviour says: their word always carrying their meaning, and *their yea, being yea: and their nay, nay*; or they always doing as they say, which would make no need of *Swearing in their Communication*, Matt. 5:37. And were this Simplicity practised accordingly, none would ever need to question them; because none would ever be deceived by them. Truth would be secured by their Saying, and their Word might be safely built on. In their plain Words, Men would have their Sense, and should be sure of suitable Performance.

But especially it should be observed in *Promises*, which make more Dependence, and are a higher Bond of Faith. And most of all in *Oaths*, which appeal, for the Conformity betwixt our Thoughts and Expressions, to the God of Truth and Simplicity it self. No Man should have his Faith abused, or be deceived by us in any Communication; but least of all in these. Thus God's Promise, and his Oath, *S. Paul* calls *two immutable things*,

things, by which it is impossible for God to lye, i.e. to abuse and delude Faith, or to beget a wrong belief, or expectation, in any, Heb. 6. 18.

And it should be observed in these Communications, *by all Persons, especially by Men Sacred in their Functions, as Bishops, and Priests, who are* † 2 Cor. 5. *as the † mouth of God, and God's Ambassadors* 20. *and Magistrates, who act in God's Place, and* * Rom. 13. *are also, as the Scripture says, " God's Ministers."* 4. And especially, in *things of Power and Authority, as Laws and Edicts.* There ought to be the greatest Simplicity and Plain-Dealing, in the Words and Ways of *Ministers, and Magistrates;* who would not only, as others, abuse the Faith of their Brethren, but defecate their Station, and dishonor that God of Simplicity and Truth, in whose Place they stand, by deceitful and delusive Dealing. There ought also to be the same, in the Expressions of Publick Laws; which must always be meant and expounded, with Ingenuity and Plainness. For Laws, are the Patrons, and the Guard of Faith and Innocence: and so must be Patterns of what they Patronize, by their own Sincerity and Fairness. They must never teach us how to cozen, or insnare others. They must never lie in Quirks and evasive Senses; which Deceitfulness of the Laws themselves, will ungird and prostitute them, and only teach People how to cheat in their Obedience. It will cut off the Simplicity of Obedience, and call Subjects only to the invention of Subleties, to out-wit Laws, instead of observing them. For Laws are not kept, but cozen'd and abused, by evasive Glosses.

So

that this Simplicity, as it must be most in Oaths, chiefly when backed by solemn Oaths: more especially, when these are made by Ministers, or Magistrates, who are Sacred Persons: most especially, when they are made also in obedience to Laws, and in Words prescribed by the Laws themselves.

But now, contrary to all these Ways and Obligations of Simplicity, is the Way of *Worldly Wisdom*. It may sometimes be for taking things easily, and by bare-faced Violence, where it is powerful enough. But its ordinary Method, is to practise more covertly, and its great Instrument is Craft and Deceit. When there is need thereof, it is not apt to stick at forging a down-right Lye, and unpalliable Falshood, to bring its end about. But where it practises with more barefacedness, it will deceive as effectually, by saying but deceitful Truths, which are only seeming Truths, but real Falshoods. Sometimes, in the end it may be mistaken, it will hide it self in a Mist of Words. At others, it will play upon the Faith of Men, by Ambiguities of Words and Phrases, expecting they will bite at one meaning whilst it reserves another to it self. Or, if it doth not fall upon them to deceive directly; it will lead them about craftily, by a Circle of Words or Circumlocutions, intermixing secretly true and false, and laying Snares, till it has got them within the Compass of Deceit at last. It will be open, in so much as shall serve its turn; and artificially conceal what makes against it. It represents things, not as they are in themselves, but

but in such Dress as best suits its own purpose, amplifying, or detracting, palliating, or disguising, not so as sets off its own Thoughts, but for Convenience. Or, if it is so nice, as to boggle at the Abuse of Words; it will more easily swallow a like Juggle, and Deceit in Actions. It will give the outward Appearances, without inward Realities; seem to be, what it is not; and not to be, what it is: Do in all things like those that profess what it thinks not; or that deny what it really believes. The outward Shews, of its Belief or Expectations, Mind and Judgment, of its Desires or Affections, what pleases or displeases it: are not the true Draught of its inward Sentiments, but only of its outward Interests. It pretends what it gets by, not what it really is, or believes: and seeks it self, not what it shews; in all its Pretences. Its Appearances, are Hypocrisie; its secret end, still self-design; its Method, not Truth, but Delusion; not harmlesness to others, but preventing, tho by any Loss of theirs, all Harm, Dissatisfaction, or Disappointment to it self.

So that, instead of being true and single, plain and open, innocent and undefigning: a worldly wise Man, is all Lyes and Falshood, Trick and Deceit, full of Turnings and Windings, Shifts and Evasions, Mists and false Colors, meer Shews and Pretences; pretending and appearing one thing, but being and intending another; and never true to what he seems, further than that happens to run true, to his own self-ends and carnal Convenience. He is not fixt, to any just and honest

honest Principles; but is for *κατασκευάζειν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ*,
for accommodating his manners, to serve turns,
for being quick-sighted at serving his own Ad-
vantage by Deceit, as I noted from S. Basil. By
which deceitful Shews, and false Seemings,
does the Injury to Truth, he violates Charity
and Justice; oftentimes drawing Men in thereby,
to their Prejudice. And abuses Confidence,
which, to an ingenuous Spirit, should lay on one
the highest Obligation, working their harm, by
every Faith and Trust, they repose in him.
And for the most part highly abuses good things
themselves; and that virtuous forwardness well meaning
Men have to promote them, whilst, under a false
Cover and Shew thereof, he steals away their
Concurrence, to his own unlawful Purposes, or
his own Self-Designs.

C H A P.

CHAP VII.

Of not discharging Relative Duties, for ends of Religion, or of our own Ease.

THE other Instance which I mentioned, *Doing ill to bring about some Good desired, by throwing off Relative Duties.* And this is another Care of *Spiritual Prudence*, viz. in the

Second Place, that in any Relations, when they grow burdensome to us, for ends, either of Religion or of our own Ease, it doth not admit of any Discharge of Relative Duties. God, both in Nature and Scripture, has required us, as to be just to all Men; so to be Grateful to our Benefactors, and Dutiful to our Superiors, to honor, obey, and keep subject, to our Parents, our Princes, and other Powers, whom he has placed over us.

I. And these Duties and Returns, he calls for towards them, *whatever their Religion be, whether true or false.* Be they Christians or Heathens, Jews or Mahometans, true Worshipers or Idolaters; Children must honor and obey, support and succor their Parents, and Wives their Husbands, and Servants their Masters, and Subjects their Sovereigns. These are among those things, which Nature it self has writ in all Mens Hearts, and wherein, as S. Paul says, they that have

are not the written Law, are a Law unto themselves, their own Consciences bearing witness to them, without the need of any further Revelation, and their thoughts accusing or excusing them, according as they have kept or transgressed them: Rom. 2. 14, 15. So that if the Relatives were all Heathens; yet their natural Conscience, without the help of Scripture, would teach one to call for his Duty, and another to shew and pay it; and accuse them, if they did it not.

Accordingly, when the Apostles went out to preach among Heathens, and to proselyte those, whose Relations were Worshipers of false Gods, or set up unclean Spirits, or Devils, for Gods: they do not in the least exempt them from any relative Duties towards such Idolaters; but require a greater Heartiness and Conscientiousness, in the due Discharge thereof. *Children obey your Parents in all things, as what is well-pleasing to the Lord, saith S. Paul, Col. 3. 20.* And *Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh, as if unto the Lord, as serving therein the Lord Christ: Ver. 22.*

Wives, be in subjection to your own Husbands, says S. Peter, yea, to those that obey not the Lord, but are to be won by the Wives good Conversation, without the Word, 1 Pet. 3. 1. Honor the King, says he again, and * *submit your selves to* * Tit. 3. 1. *every Ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the King as supreme, or unto Governors, as sent by him; c. 2. 13, 14, 17. Ye must needs be subject, yea, every Soul, not only for wrath, but Conscience sake, says S. Paul, Rom. 13. 1, 5.* Whenas,

at

at this time, as is notorious, Kings and Sovereign Powers were Heathens.

Thus careful were they, not to seem in the least to set Men free, from any Relative Duties and Obligations, towards their Heathen and Idolatrous Relations. And this with the more exactness, to cut off from the *Heathen World*, (who knew well enough the Dueness and Necessity of these things, and the Guilt of the contrary, without the Preaching of the Apostles,) all color for aspersing Christianity, as overthrowing Justice and Morality; as pulling up Foundations of Nature, and setting persons loose, from the Obligations of their several Relations. Which would have been the greatest Scandal that could have been fixed upon Religion; and have made it to turn the Moral and Natural Obligation, as well as the Heathen Superstition of the World, upside down. *Teach Wives, to be obedient to their own Husbands, and to take care of their Children, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. And Servants, to be obedient, shewing all good Fidelity, that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things*, says S. Paul, Tit. 2. 4, 5, 9, 10. *Submit to every Ordinance of Man*, says S. Peter, *for so is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men.* 1 Pet. 2. 13, 15.

Again,

2. He calls for these Relative Duties, and Performances towards Men of all Religions, *whatever their Performance, on their Part, be towards us.* We must be dutiful Children to hard, improvident, or careless Parents; and faithful Servants, to threatening

...ing and unequal Masters; and obedient
... to bad Husbands; and good, and true
... to ill administering and unrighteous So-
... nans.

...vants, be subject with all fear, not only to the
... and Gentle, but also to the froward, saith S. Pe-
... not only whilst you receive Right, but when,
... good Conscience towards God, you suffer wrong-
... at their hands: 1 Pet. 2. 18, 19.

... Pontius Pilate was far from discharging the
... of a good Governor to our Blessed Saviour, † Joh. 19
... his Blood only to satisfy the Peoples Cla- 4, 6, 15,
... against the Conviction of his own Conscience. 16.
... yet our Lord took care, to approve himself a
... Subject towards him, (as he had done be-
... towards the Chief Priests, * forbidding his Ser- * Jo. 18.
... to use the Sword against them in his own 11.
... licence,) owning even at that time, his Power Luc. 22.
... from above, Jo. 19. 11. 49, 50, 51.

... Ananias the High Priest, did not sure perform
... his part, when, sitting to judge Paul by Law,
... commanded him to be smitten contrary to the Law,
... 23. 2, 3. But yet, even under this Grievance,
... Paul confesses he ought him all the same Duty,
... which he should have owed to a more just Judge,
... and begs pardon for having forgot himself, and not
... spoken so reverently towards him upon that oc-
... casion, as the Law required towards the Ruler of the
... People, Verſ. 5.

... Saul, unquestionably was guilty of Male-admi-
... nistration in an high degree, and far from dis-
... charging towards David, his Duty of Protecti-
... on: yea, moreover, he was reprobated by God,
... rejected from being King, 1 Sam. 15. 23. But
... yet

yet, for all that, *David* was still bound in Conscience, to perform his Duty of Subjection towards this unrighteous Sovereign. As he did, when he had the highest Temptation, and the most Providential opportunities, to rid himself of him; owning him even then for the *Lord Anointed*, and saying, *Who can lift up a hand against him, and be guiltless?* 1 Sam. 24. 3, 6. & Ch. 26. 9.

Lastly, No man will say the Emperors and Rulers in the Apostles Days, performed the Part of Good Governors; Persecuting the true Religion, instead of Protecting it; preying upon the Remains of Roman Liberties, instead of preserving them; and Ruling by Blood, Injustice, and Oppression, instead of just and regular Administration. But yet, towards these *Non-Performers*, and Notorious Violators of Princes Duties, the *Apostles* injoin all the Subjects of the Empire, most punctually and Conscientiously to discharge their Duties: *putting them in mind, to be subject to Principalities, and to obey Magistrates, Tit. 3. 1. not only for Wrath, but Conscience, Rom. 13. 5. as the Will of God, and for the Lord's sake, 1 Pet. 2. 13, 15.* All which, God strictly exacted, and Good Men in all times most Conscientiously performed, not daring to shake off Subjection, and rise up against God's Vice-gerents, when they proved the most unjust Invaders of Religion and Rights, as they who list, may see * proved at large.

* In a Discourse intitled,

Christianity a Doctrine of the Cross under unrighteous Rulers. Or, Passive Obedience under Invasion of Legal Rights and Liberties.

In all these Relations, each side must look to what concerns themselves. Their Duties are Mutual, but not Conditional: so that we may not break with them, tho they break with us. The breach of their Part, is ill in them. And therefore, since what is ill in one, cannot be good in another, the Breach of ours, must needs be answerably ill in us too. So that not to go along with them in an ill thing, or be condemned for Company; we must every one take care to discharge our own Duty, whether our Relatives make due Return of Duty, and discharge theirs towards us, or no.

Indeed, all the Laws of the *Second Table*, or the Duties of Justice, are absolute in Obligation, without regard, either to the Religion, or to the Good Performances, and Moral Qualities of Men. We must speak Truth, and keep Faith and Promises, especially when confirm'd by solemn Oaths, and deal justly, and, where we have received Favours, remember them gratefully, especially in their need, and return them as we can, even towards the worst Persons, to none of the worst Carriage, and of the worst Religions, Hereticks or Infidels. The *Jews*, were for streightning the Exercise of Justice, Gratitude, and Kindness, not extending it to men of an opposite and hated Religion, but confining the *Neighbour* mention'd in the Law, to a *Fellow Jew*, or one of their own Nation and Religion. But to cure this, our Lord instructs them, in the *Parable of the man falling among Thieves*, that *the Jews must be Neighbours, even to the Samaritans*; bidding him that asked, *Who*

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is my Neighbour? after he had related, how Neighbourly the Samaritan dealt by the Jew in Distress, Go, and do thou likewise, Luk. 10. 29, 30, & 37. Honour thy Father and Mother, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit Adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not bear false Witness; are Commandments, that oblige equally towards all Persons. We are no more at Liberty, to break any of them, towards a Pagan, than towards a Christian; a Papist, than a Protestant; an ill and unjust, than towards a Good and Righteous Man. More particularly kind, we ought to be to the Household of Faith, and those of our own way. But just, and true, and grateful, is what in common we are bound to be to all.

All this, is plainly owned, and implied in that Maxim, which is confessed by all sober Persons, and expressly denied by none, but some wild Enthusiasts, viz. *That worldly Dominion is not founded in Grace.* Indeed, Grace confers Titles, and has its Claims; but those are in another Life, where all Possessions will be measured out, according to the Degrees of Mens Graces, and Religious Performances. But here, without any regard to the Graciousness of their Hearts or Carriage, this World's Properties are all to pass among men, according to humane Rights and Titles. No man can make out, that he has Right to anothers Power or Property, by pleading that his Faith is more Orthodox, or his Life more just and holy; i. e. that he is more Gracious. Nor that the Legal Owner has forfeited his Right to them, by his Apostasie from Truth, or Holiness, or turning Graceless. The

The Truth is, the World needs nothing more to make them sensible of the iniquity of this, than to bring it home to their own Case. For if one man may turn another out of his Legal Power and Property, on Pretence he has not the Grace to keep in the Right way to the other World; nor to use and employ them well for the Good of this; what Change would this make among Proprietors, and how would it Dispossess the Greatest Part of the Inhabitants of the Earth? Yea, particularly of those, who are most uneasy, and cast the most envious and malignant Eye, at the Power and Property of others. So that it would quite throw out this Pretence, of *Discharging our selves of Relative Duties, or Dissolving Relatives of their Legal Rights and Claims, because of Heresie, Non-Performance, &c. i. e. of Ungraciousness*: if men would but allow their Relatives and Rulers common Justice, (who, if any, sure should have Preference,) and do by them, as they would be willing to be dealt by themselves. *Honour thy Father and Mother*; and, *Thou shalt not steal*, are Precepts universal: securing the Powers and Properties of the Graceless, as much as of the Gracious. Just therefore we must be to Power and Property, wheresoever we meet it lodged by Law, whether in the good or bad. And thus just we shall be to the worst and most ungracious Relatives, if we will allow them the common Benefit of God's Laws, as made for their Protection as well as ours; and grant them, to whom we owe, not only Justice, but Reverence, what in common Right and Equality, we all claim for our selves.

From all this I observe, when men stand in Relation to any Person, *we must distinguish what they do in discharge of Duty to him, as a Relation; and what in Favour of his ways, and Religion.* It is either a Great weakness, or a Great wickedness in men, to suspect all those that are for shewing inviolate Duty to a Popish King, as being Favourers of the Popish Religion; and for paying all that is due to a King, when he breaks the Laws, as if they affected, and were for setting up a Power Arbitrary and lawless. As if there could be no Duty, to his Power and Person, without inclination to his way and Religion. What would these Persons, have said to *St Paul*, and the *holy Apostles*, had they lived in those days? Would they have accused them, as secret Friends to Heathenism, and as having heathen Gods, as now they are wont to say of others, that they *have a Pope in their Bellies*, because they preach'd up a strict and inviolate Subjection to the Emperors, and other Powers, for all they were Heathens? Or, that they were Enemies, and Betrayers of the *Roman Liberties*, and for making the Empire more absolute than it was, because those Emperors were for grasping at the small remains of Liberty, and for being more and more lawless? Their Duty, as I have shewn, they must perform to them, and do all that is just to such an one, both as a man, and a King, in Duty to his Person, and Relation. Tho at the same time, they bear the most unmoveable averfeness and opposition, standing out to the last, in such ways, as their Duty to God and him allows them to make use of, against

gainst his way and Religious Persuasion. 'Tis only in Conscience of what he is, not in good liking or approbation of what he doth, that they pay these things to such a Person.

I note also, That in speaking of these Duties, even in the Case of such Persons, we must not talk, as if we performed them, not from Principles of Conscience, but only from Humane inducements. 'Tis the way of too many, God knows, to discourse in these things, as if the hank these Duties have on us, towards such unpleasing Relatives, were not on our Conscience, but on our Convenience. Their Care, and good Carriage, they will allow, as a Reason of our Duty and Observance; but their Faults and Failures, as a Reason also, to justify ours. They insist upon Reasons of Ingenuity in this Case, and ask, How one could expect more, that perform'd no more, or dealt no better? And look on the ripping up their Rulers Non-performance, as a Reason to vindicate their own. All which is, as if God had required nothing in the Relation, but all we owed, were to the Carriage of the Person. 'Tis to act only by Principles of Interest, or at best of Ingenuity; but not out of Principle of Conscience, which is the same when they go wrong and when they go right, or not from any regard to God, or sense of Duty at all.

C H A P. VIII

Of the Imprudence of pursuing our Ends by unlawful Means.

HAVING said thus much of this *First Rule* of Spiritual Wisdom, *viz. Not doing Evil, that Good may come*, or not making use of any unlawful ways, for the compassing our Ends, or Desires: Besides what I have hitherto said of the Religion, I will now add a little, in the last Place, of the Wisdom of this Course, and shew how prudent it is, never to take up with any Sin, in Pursuit the most desired Design.

Prudent I mean, not only for the next World; but for the accomplishment of our Designs here in this. If worldly men would really be wise for worldly things, and take the way that is best here at present: they must not sin against God, to bring their Ends about; which, however promising it may seem to them, is not really the way to make, but to mar them.

The Reason of this is, because the compassing of any Effects, *depends more upon God and his Providence, than on any humane Means*. The best and likeliest Preparations, can never bring them about, when he goes not along with them: and the lowest and most unlikely, are sure to do it, when he doth. Now the way to have God with us, is by *trusting him, and keeping in his ways*.

If we dare rely on Providence, and trust God, he will not fail those that trust him, but take the tenderest care of them, and shew himself remarkably,
in

in preserving and speeding their matters on. I mean those matters, which, in consistence with the Designs of his Providence, he sees fit to take effect: and no means, or methods, can bring about any things else. As there is no Friend, or Deliverer, like God; and no Comfort, like hope in him: So is there no way to make an interest with him, like confiding in, and depending on him. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee, saith the Prophet, Isa. 26. 3.* But to mistrust God, is the way to disoblige and lose him, and, together with him, our own Prosperity and Success too. As the Jews, who would not believe the Lord their God, and trust him, when he gave them his Word to bring them into the Land of Canaan, Deut. 1. 32. are put out of all hopes of Coming thither, and bid to turn, and take their journey into the Wilderness; and told, even in the height of their warlike Preparation, when they had girded on every man his Weapons, that if they would go up now, and fight, it should be at their own Peril, for *be the Lord was not among them.* And accordingly, they were chased and destroyed, as many as did presumptuously attempt it, v. 40, 41, 42, 43, 44. Thus it also fared with the Lord, that in the great Famine at Samaria, would not believe the sudden Plenty, which God promised, and foretold by his Servant Elisha: *Thou shalt see it with thine eyes,* said God to him, *but thou shalt not eat thereof,* 2 King. 7. 2. which accordingly fell out, v. 17, 20. And with King Asa, who, on Baasha's Coming up against him, relied not on the Lord, but on the Syrians; and, in his disease, sought not to the Lord, but

to the Physicians : Herein thou hast done foolishly, saith the Prophet, therefore from henceforth thou shalt have Wars, 2 Chron. 16. 2, 3, 8, 9, 12.

And this Trust, must be by *keeping in his own Ways*: which, when they seem to have the least of visible Probabilities, have the most of Providence; and so, to those that ascribe most to Providence, must needs appear the surest way to success. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 37. 34.* Tho in this keeping to God's Ways, we should have no visible Preparations to trust to: yet is Providence, the Ground of our Confidence, full of invisible ones; which do abundantly more assure Deliverance, or Success, than any others; and which are discernable to the eye of Faith, tho not to an eye of Flesh. Thus, when *the City was compassed with Horses, and Chariots, and a Mighty host of Syrians, sent by the King of Syria to take Elisha*: tho he had no visible Guard to resist these Forces, yet had he a Wall of Fire of Providence, *the Mountain*, where he was, being full of *Horses, and Chariots of Fire, or Guards of Angels, round about Elisha*. So that when Humane Eyes, could see none to preserve him; yet could he say to his Servant, *Fear them not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them, 2 King. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17.* And when the Great Lord in *Jehoram's Court*, thought the Plenty prophesied to be in *Samaria the next day, to be impossible*, and that, unless God should make *Windows in Heaven* on purpose, it could never be brought to pass: the end shew'd, that God can infinitely out-wit us, and absolutely surprise us with issues; and that, when there seems

seems no way to us, Providence has always enow, that never enter'd into our Thoughts. As the Event in that case made appear, God raising the Siege in haste, by filling the *Syrians* with Fear of mighty Succours come to the *King of Israel*, on their bearing in the night a noise of Horses, and Chariots, and of a great Host, 2 King. 7. 2, 6, 7.

But if, when there is no visible Appearance of succeeding, or being safe otherwise, to save our selves we step out of God's ways, and, instead of what is lawful, betake our selves to what seems expedient and serviceable: *in leaving the way of Innocence, we are like also, when we least suspect it, to lose the way of Success, and when we desert God, God and Providence will desert us.* Order thy way right, and trust in him, says the wise Son of Sirach: *do not go not aside, lest ye fail, Eccus. 2. 6, 7.* We shall not only this way be unrelieved by the Blessing and Assistance; but broken and opposed, most commonly, by the just Judgment of Providence, setting it self against us. For he disappointeth the Devices of the Crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their Enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own Craftiness, making their Methods bring about what they studied to avoid, and the Counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noon day, in the night, Job 5. 12, 13, 14.

God loves to defeat such unlawful, and irreligious Expedients; and to turn wicked Policy and ungodly Wisdom, into Foolishness. To make it hinder, and obstruct that very Good, it was made use of to acquire; and to bring on us that very Evil or Trouble, which thereby we seek to remove.

move. *Who, says the Prophet, among us, shall be able to dwell with the devouring Fire kindled by the King of Assyria, call'd Everlasting Burnings, in regard they could see no likelihood of any End of his Devastations? He shall, answers he, that walks righteously, and speaketh uprightly; that despiseth the gain of Oppressions, or handling of Bribes, and stops his ears from hearing of Blood, or Bloody Counsellors, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil. By this Religious stiffness, and standing off from the Course of Wickedness in those evil Times, instead of being more exposed to them, as you suppose, he shall be preserved; as safe as he, who is set on high, and whose place of Defence is the Munition of Rocks, or a strong Tower situate on inaccessible Rocks, where is neither want of bread nor water, and so no danger of being reduced through want of Provisions, to surrender. But as for the Sinners in Sion, or those, says * Grotius, that, against their own Consciences, were for changing their Principles and Religion, to procure Favour from the conquering Assyrian; they are afraid, and Fearfulness hath surprised these hypocrites, the accomplishment of their Fears, instead of the Removal of them, being all they should get by their Apostasie and ungodly Diffimulation, Isa. 33. 14, 15, 16.*

Thus we find it has usually been, with the Resorters to forbidden and unlawful ways, in constant Experience. Their fancied Remedy, has proved their real Snare, and what they took to cure Fear, God ordinarily turned to accomplish it.

Thus at Babel, the Presumption and Pride of men, in building of a lofty Tower, to make them

Name,

and to prevent their Dispersion, Gen. 11. 4. turned into a Blot upon their Name, and makes the very means of scattering them, v. 7, 8, 9.

The Brethren of Joseph, to prevent the verifying of his Dreams, viz. that they, who were his Elders, should come at last to worship him, and do him their Obeisance: most wickedly sold him for a slave to the Midianite Merchants, who brought him to the Egyptians, Gen. 37. 7, 9, 19, 28. But an unnatural and ungodly Expedient, of preventing these Submissions; God over-rules for every Method of bringing them about. When the time, and Course of Providence, came, to send the Corn of Egypt; and Joseph, to be Governor of the Land, and in sole Power to dispose thereof; and these same Brethren came, and bowed themselves before him, with their Faces to the earth, Gen. 42. 6, 10. & Ch. 50. 18.

Jedekiah, and the Jews, when, being brought into Subjection to the King of Babylon, they had all submitted, made a Covenant, and taken an Oath to him: repenting afterwards of their Subjection, they were to Rebel, and break that Oath, which their Prince and People had taken, in hopes the King of Egypt would stand by them, Ezek. 17. 12, 13, 14, 15. But these wicked ways, of Rebellion and Perjury, for the recovering invaded Liberty: instead of removing, as they promised themselves, God declares should both increase, and fix their Slavery, and Misery, v. 17. ad 22. Like as, the Rebelling for Laws and Liberties, against our Martyred Sovereign; turned, by God's just Judgment, into such an Overthrow of Laws, and Loss of Liberty, and introduction of extreme Servitude, as, since

since they had the Charters of Laws and Liberties, had not before been brought upon this People.

The succeeding Jews, some hundreds of years afterwards, resolved, by Bloody and wicked hands to cut off Christ, for Fear, should they let him alone and go on to be generally taken for Christ the King; that the Romans, jealous thereby of their Dejection, would come, and take away their Place and Nation, Joh. 11. 48. And, 'tis expedient, said Caiaphas, that one man dye, rather than the whole Nation should perish, v. 50. But this horrible Way or Expedient, of preserving the Nation, and keeping out the Romans; God turns into the way of destroying their Nation, and calling of the Romans in.

For the terrible Coming of the Roman Armies, first under Vespasian, and after under his Son Titus; was a † Verification of the Coming of Christ, foretold, Mat. 24. 3. And in that miserable Destruction, or taking away of their City and Nation, the Emperors owned the Vengeance to be God's. The hand of God is plainly with us; and the Earthquake, mutual Seditions, unexpected Fall of Walls on their side without help of our Engines, are so many marks of the Wrath of God upon them; says † Titus to his Soldiers. It was plainly God, that helped us when we fought. It was God, that drew the Jews from these Strong-holds; was again * his Exclamation, when he took the City, and saw those Towers, from which no Force could have driven them, deserted by the Jews. The Quarrel, they acknowledged to be God's; and themselves, only his Instruments; (as Attila the Hunn afterwards stiled himself Flagellum Dei, God's Scourge on the degenerate

† Vid. Dr. Hammond in loc.

‡ Ap. Joseph. de Bello. 17. c. 1.

* Ib. c. 16.

erate Christians :) and thereupon would nei-
of them be called *Judaicus*, as * *Dio* notes, * *Dio Xy-*
refused the Honor of a Triumph, for the Victory *phylin. in*
Overthrow of the Jews. The Soldiers burnt the *Vespas.*
ple, tho against the Desire, and Edict of Ti-
us moved by a Divine Impulse, ‡ says *Jose- ‡ L. 7. c.*
And when the *Balistæ*, the Shooting Engines, 10. & c. 9.
the beginning of the Siege were brought up,
played upon them: *Filius venit*, or the Son
, was by an over-ruling Providence, the
of Warning, as || he reports, or the common || *Ib. l. 6.*
ification given by their Watch-men to the Jews, c. 7.
as the Engines played. So answering our
our Christ's Expression, who had usually
warned them with this Desolation, under the
ale of † his Coming, or of * the Coming of the † *Matt.*
Man. Which was thus verified upon these 24. 3.
churches, who now found, when it was too late to * *Matt.*
want it, how the Cry and Quarrel of that Blood, 16. 27, 28.
brought in these over-powering Romans,
which their Predecessors, yea, many among their
selves still living, had shed to keep them out.
In like sort, as our Ancestors, by rebelling a-
gainst that excellent Prince, *Charles I.* to keep out
Popery, have brought upon us their Posterity, all
late Fears of Popery, and those terrifying
attempts it so lately has, or still may make upon
The cutting off that most Pious and Ortho-
dox Prince, who would have carefully principled
all his Children in the Belief of Protestants; and
driving out the Royal Issue into Popish Countries,
exposed with utmost advantage to be practised
upon by Popish Relations and Instructors; being
the visible Cause of the King's misperuasion, and
turn'd

turn'd by a just God, instead of yielding Relief to be a direct and apparent Cause and Accomplisher of those Fears and Sorrows.

To prevent the Increase, and Propagation of Christianity afterwards, the Jews raised a general Persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem, and scattered it abroad, *Act. 8. 1.* But God turn'd this Scattering, and Dispersing of the Members which they had recourse to, for the Overthrow and Abolition; into a farther Dissemination of the Faith. Which they, who were thus dispersed abroad, took along with them, and Dispersed Preaching the Word every where, as they came: *1. 12.*

The Gnosticks, in the Days of Persecution struck in, and externally complied, both with Jews and Gentiles, hoping thereby to save themselves. With the Jews, they went along unwisely, in observing their Rites, and in persecuting and compelling the Orthodox Christians to observe them: only to get Favor with them, by seeming zealous for Judaism, and lest, as S. Paul † says, they should suffer Persecution from them for the Cross of Christ. And with the Gentiles they went to the Feasts and Sacrifices: those whom S. Paul disputes against for Feasting in Idol-Temples, *1 Cor. 8. (also c. 10. 19, 20.)* being the *πρωτοί*, as they loved to call themselves, or the great Boasters of, and Pretenders to Knowledge; as the Apostle sufficiently intimates, *V. 1, 2, 10, 11.* and it being one of the Doctrines of their Followers, as * Eusebius testifies from Agrippa Castor, that they might lawfully eat of Idol-Sacrifices, and forswear the Faith in time of Persecution.

But those abominable Compliances, which they

Gal. 5.

† 1.

Gal. 6.

12.

* Escl.
Hist. l. 4.
c. 7.

up, as the way to save their Lives: God, in
 just Providence, makes the Cause of their lo-
 of their Lives. Whilst all the upright Or-
 dox, by the Oracle and Admonition of God to
 holy Men, all with one consent timely left the
 before it was begirt, as † Eusebius relates, and
 themselves at Pella, a City || of Decapolis be-
 Jordan, and a more secure place: these wick-
 Temporizers, persisting in their former Com-
 plices, and coming to their last Passover, as o-
 did, were there shut up together with them
 us, and perished with the Jews: In which,
 Lord verified his own Rule in this Case: *Who-*
will save his Life, i. e. by sinful Complian-
as these men did with Jews or Gentiles, in
and Persecutions, shall lose it. As on the
contrary, whosoever will lose his Life, or run the
ard of losing it, when there is nothing but a
whereby to escape, for my sake, the same
find or † save it, Matth. 16. 25. And to which
 Peter also may seem to have reference, when,
 his second Epistle, writ very near this final Over-
 of their City and Nation, he tells the Chri-
 s laboring under Persecution, which the Jews
 gently set on, that *the Lord knows how to deli-*
the Godly, or those who in all their Dangers
stick to their Duty and Trust in Providence, out
Temptations; and to reserve the unjust, or those,
who by wicked Shifts seek to escape, unto the Day
Judgment to be punished. As it signally happened
with these Gnosticks, when the Day of the Lord, as
the Scripture often calls it, came on the Jews; or by
God's just Judgment they were all destroyed,
 2 Pet. 2. 9.

† Hist. 1. 3.
 c. 5.
 || Vid. Dr.
 Lightfoot.
 Chorag.
 Dec. in S.
 Mar. c. 7.
 Sect. 4.

† Matth. 23.
 35.

Indeed this Preservation of themselves in that
 common

common Overthrow, by not craftily deserting, but honestly adhering to their Duty, is what * Christ promised; and what, as it drew on, the † Apostle prescribed for their Encouragement; and what the poor persecuted Christians || believed, and waited for. And accordingly, when the time did come, which in Mat. 24. was presignified, the Providence of God did most watchfully and wonderfully accomplish, and bring it about. When the Abomination of Desolation, i.e. the Roman Armies, which make all desolate, called abominable, because of their Heathen and Idolatrous Worship, stands in or about the holy Place, viz. the City Jerusalem: or, as it is in S. Luke, when Jerusalem is compassed about with Armies, as it was by Cestius Gallus: Then know, say our Lord, that the destruction thereof is nigh, and let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains, or out of it, to some quiet and secure place, Matt. 24. 15, 16. Luke 21. 20, 21. The Siege of Cestius gave the Alarm, according to this Prediction. And when he, without any visible Cause, both unexpectedly, and most unaccountably and unwisely, as || Josephus notes, raised the Siege; that gave the upright Christians Liberty and Opportunity, before it being begun again, to draw themselves off; and the Oracle of God to some holy Men, made them all with one consent to embrace it. So that when Titus at last came before it, at the time of the Passover, when all the Jews and Judaizers from all Places were come up to the Feast; there were only unbelieving Jews, and hypocritical Judaizing Christians, to be shut up for the Slaughter. All the upright Orthodox, having, by the Care of a Gracious and an Indulgent God, made their Escape before.

* Mat. 24.

12, 13.

† Heb. 10.

37.

2 Thess. 1.

7.

|| 1 Pet. 1.

5.

|| De Bel-

10, l. 2. c.

24.

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In sum, this way of preserving those, by unforeseen Providences, who would not seek, when there was no other visible means, to preserve themselves by sin; and of disappointing those, who, in distrust of Providence, make unlawful ways their refuge, causing the wicked Remedies of their fear, to prove the fatal accomplisshers thereof; has still been God's course. Look at the Generations of old, and see, says the Son of Sirach, did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken, or God leave those, that had not first left him? *Eccius. 2. 10.* And, on the other hand, the fear of the Wicked, says Solomon, or of him that betakes himself to wicked ways, to keep off what he fears, shall come upon him, *Prov. 10. 24.*

This, I grant, it doth not always, in the issue of things here; there being no Rule in these matters, viz. the Orderings of Providence, but admits of some exceptions, and wherein, for wise Reasons, God may alter and change sometimes. but thus it is in ordinary course; and 'tis not rare and extraordinary contingencies, but the ordinary course of Events, that must ground our hopes, and guide our expectations of them. It usually happens so, and is so common, that 'tis drawn into a Rule by the Spirit of God, and the carefullest Observers of Providence. Particularly by Solomon, in several places, who tells us, that he only, who walketh uprightly, walketh surely: But that he, who perverteth his way, shall be known, *Prov. 10. 9.* That whilst the integrity of the upright, guides, and delivers them, perverseness destroys the transgressors; and the wicked, instead of standing thereby,

thereby, shall fall by his own wickedness; being not extricated, as they hoped, but taken and insnared in their own Naughtiness, Prov. 11. 3, 5, 6. That whilst Righteousness, tho' it may seem to endanger, and expose, yet really keepeth him that is upright in the way: Wickedness, on the contrary, for all it may seem to uphold, overthroweth the Sinner, c. 13. 6. His own Wickedness shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the Cords of his Sins, c. 5. 22.

The great Pretence, for Mens stretching to such unlawful Expedients, is many times the preservation of their Children or Families, of Religion and the Church, or other Publick Ends. And the Method of Providence is to make them Fools in their ungodly Expedients, causing them to fall by their wickedness. And, at the same time, in his own way, often securing those innocent persons, or holy things, they were afraid, and sin'd for. Thus it was in the Case of the Israelites, when God would have had them go into the Land of Canaan; they would not go, or trust to his Power to carry them on, but were for turning back again, for fear, as of themselves, so least their little ones should become a Prey to the Inhabitants, who were People of very big Bodies, and lived in Towns of extraordinary strength, Deut. 1. 27, 28. 32. 39. For this, by Travels in the Wilderness, God consumed all these men, that thus sinfully Revolted in hopes of Preservation, v. 35. 40. But as for their little ones, for whose sakes they sin'd, lest they should become a Prey to the Canaanites, and which in that day, having no knowledge between Good and Evil, could

not

not partake of their Fathers Offences, he declared he would, and so accordingly he did, *bring them in, and gave it to them for a Possession*, v. 39.

Thus is all use of wicked Means, and unlawful Expedients, as a most wicked, so a most foolish Course. Since there is more done towards success, by Providence, than by visible Preparations; there must needs be more security thereof, by Faith in God, in ways of innocency, than by any promising ways of sinning, for expediency. To offer up our Sins, as Actors under his Providence, is not sure the likely way to success; if Providence must give success. God is never like to bless what is sought by such Instruments, they are enough with him, to mar any Design, which they meddle in. So that if we would, not only keep a good Conscience, or be wise for the next world; but prosper and speed in any Designs in this World, either for God, or Religion, the Church, or Kingdom, for our Selves, or our Friends, we should never seek to succeed by the least Sin. We must never make Lyes our Refuge, or Falsifie by Word or Practice; nor make our selves better, or others, even our Enemies, worse than they are. We must forge no false Reasons, nor brand any with unjust Names, or load them with Slanders. Nor in any wise break Faith, or pervert Justice, or oppress by violence, no not even those who sought to oppress us; or get by evil Arts, or wickedly keep what we have once unrighteously got; or break any other Commandment or Law of God, when such breach may be suggested, or seem to lie in our way, as an use-

ful Expedient. O Whatever our Designs are, there is no such security of success, as a good Providence, nor any way, to make so sure of this, as by trusting God, and keeping in his ways: This is a wiser, and a more likely course, even where it happens to have less of humane appearance, than any others, by ways of wickedness. Where the expediency, shall not so much set on, as the wickedness thereof, by engaging Providence against us, shall backen and defeat our purposes.

Having thus largely discoursed upon this Branch of Spiritual Prudence, *viz. against pursuing our ends, though never so fair and promising in themselves, by wicked and unlawful means*: For a Conclusion thereof, I shall only add one Caution, to keep Men from plunging themselves therein, the rather, for that in this Point, all Men are so like to be put on Tryals, and meet with Temptations to transgress.

That Rule is, especially in great and Concerning Duties, *to beware of beginning a Breach in their Integrity, and stop at the first entrance*. When once a Man gives way, by any considerable Act, to transgress the Bounds, and make any Advance in such a Business: 'tis neither for him, nor for any one else, to say where he shall stop. By corruptly yielding to Do one such ungodly, or unjust thing, he is in the ready way to do another. From coming in to do what is bad, he steps into the next disposition, to do what is worse; 'till it come to that pass, that there is no other stint or measure to his Compliances, but his Temptations. *David at first,*

first, thought only to enjoy *Bathsheba*. But having given way to go so far, he was willing, when a new necessity call'd, to hearken at that time as he had done before, till, from committing *Adultery*, he was got in to commit Murder. *St. Peter* thought at first, only to dissemble, and conceal his Relation to Christ. But when his own Curiosity, and Carnal Considerations, had carried him on to that; the Justice of God left him to *Satan*, and his own heart, and opportunities of Temptation which he himself had sought, to be carried beyond it; not giving over, till he had been brought, first to *Deny*, and then, with bitter execrations, to forswear his Master. Thus, when they would tempt God, by engaging themselves in a wicked thing, have the very best Men been given up, to go on from bad to worse, till they stuck at no way of serving the new Necessities of their own creating.

Indeed, he that for his Interest, will either corrupt or force his own Conscience, and yield to do one very ungodly or injurious thing; is very like, if the same interest require it, to go as far in doing of another. Nay, he is in much greater probability and preparation to do the latter, than he was to do the former. For the best guard against these Breaches, is the Virginiceness, and first Modesties and Reluctances of Conscience: Which being once violently rifled, or thrown out, the tempting offer, or sinful necessity, the next time meets with much less opposition. Conscience, that cry'd out loudly against it at the first, perhaps now, after much pains to

corrupt it, is made blind, and sees no evil in it. Or however, having been once forcibly Master'd and over-power'd, what was before a loud Cry, will afterwards dwindle into more silent and soft grumblings, till God, either in Mercy or Judgment, is pleas'd to rouse and awaken it. And the Spirit of God, having suffered violence, and been quite worsted in a long Conflict, withdraws himself, and goes off from them: being grieved, as St. Paul says, *Eph. 4. 30.* or lost and taken away, as David Complains, *Psal. 51. 10, 11.* by Mens committing, or persisting, in any great wickedness. And as he draws off, the busy and watchful Adversary comes on, and increases his Power over them; especially, when they give up Duty and a good Conscience, for worldly Gain, which makes God relinquish them, and leave them to the God of this World, which they thus shamefully prefer before him. As it happen'd to Judas, *Luk. 22. 3, 4, 5.* and Ananias, *Act. 5. 3.* and as he try'd to have compass'd in our Lord himself, endeavouring by his bait of the Kingdoms of this World, and the Glory of them, or his preferring Wealth and Power before his Maker, to have got him out of God's Protection, *Mat. 4. 8, 9.* And when by this means the regret of a Man's own Conscience is almost gone, and the Spirit of God is daily departing from him, and an evil Spirit coming in its room; he must needs be in worse condition, and more incapable than he was at first, to maintain his station.

Besides, in wicked things, the more a Man yields and complies, the more he needs to do so. New steps and transgressions, bring with them
new

new Necessities, and one ill act is a snare and argument to another. When once they have begun, and are got in, they dare not look back, but are too apt to think they must go on, and do any thing further, that comes under the Notion and Appearance of being necessary; sometimes to hide, as in *David*; or to indemnify, or, perhaps, to maintain and justify, what has been once ill done. Having lost the true Balast of Integrity and Innocence, they float now, as the Gale of outward Necessity, and Convenience drives. Not to mention, lastly, that many times one great Breach, especially repeated breaches, too commonly (God knows,) tempt men to cast off all thoughts of Repentance, and to take desperate Counsels. Thinking with themselves, that whatever they are put upon next, it can be no worse with them, than it is already. And resolving thenceforward, not to be scrupulous about right and wrong, nor stick at any thing, which comes upon them in the way they are engaged in; and that they will not forgoe the purchase and profit of the Guilt already contracted, for want of contracting a little more.

If any Person then is sincerely desirous to secure Integrity, and a clear Conscience; by all means let him keep his hands free from the first, of all impious, or unrighteous actions, or undertakings. To keep at a distance, and be no ways intangled, or engaged therein, is one of his best Guards and Securities. There is a strange fascination and intanglement in several sins, and they make Men so forsaken of God, and subject

+ 2 Tim. 2. 26. to the Devil to † be led Captive by him at his will,

That they, who are once ingaged therein, seldom recover themselves. Thus, of accompanying with the *Adulteress* or *Lewd Woman*, Solomon observes, that none, that go in unto her, return again, *Prov. 2. 17.* And of Rebellion, Samuel says, that 'tis like the sin of Witchcraft: True in this Sense, among others, that 'tis a bewitching Evil, and commonly keeps those close whom it has once got in, like an enchanted Circle, *1 Sam. 15. 23.* And so it may be said of other sins, that they intangle like Snares, and detain like Charms and Enchantments. If once a man is got in at all, a very wicked and unrighteous Affair is like a whirl-pool, which will keep those it has once caught within its Sphere, and still draw them in more and more.

But, if he has already stept aside, and fallen therein: the next care must be, to cherish, and make the most of his Relentings, if he has any; or, to Repent of his wickedness without delay, and turn back again. Or, if his fall was first occasion'd, and still continued, by an Error and mistake in Judgment, and he unlawfully ingaged therein, as thinking it without blame, thro' misperswasion; tho' he is not so happy, as to secure the Innocence and Integrity of his Actions, let him however make out, and shew forth the sincerity of his good intention; and not go further in an ill thing, than his own principle and misperswasion, which is all he has to offer in excuse, or pretend in justification, can warrant him. 'Tis a plain sign of Hypocrisie, and argues a want of sincere and honest disposition, if, upon

When new turns of necessities, men shall still start new Pretences. If they let go that, which they gave out as their ground, and professed to proceed upon before; and seek out a fitter, when, on some new Tryal and Emergence, the former Pleister proves not broad enough to cover the present Sore. This is not to bring Mens Actions to their Principles, as all must do, that would make any pretence to Virtue and Justice. But, a need is, still to study new Principles, to justify their present Actions, and serve their present necessities. Whereof interest and fleshly convenience, is the real cause; and Principles of Honesty and Conscience; with such men, are only the assumed Shews, and false Colours.

CH A P. IX.

Of Partaking in the Sins of others.

A Second Rule, which I shall note under this Branch of Spiritual Prudence, *about Means and Methods*, is, that as it doth not allow us to commit any sins our selves, for the gaining of our ends, so neither to partake in the sins of others.

There is a Partnership and Society in sin, and several men may bear their part, and have a share in the same evil Action. One, as Executing; another, as Ordering and Directing, Persuading or Enticing to it; a third, by Ministering

string helps and succours; a fourth, by approving or commending afterwards, by justification and defence thereof. All these, some as Principles, some as Accessaries, have a hand in the sin, and are accountable for the same, both before God and Men.

Now Spiritual Wisdom, knowing how offensive it is to God in all its Complices, and how fatal both to the Actors and Partakers, is not for going shares in any wickedness. It is ready to partake in the ill that is suffer'd, which shews Charity and Compassion; but never in the ill that is acted by other Men. The Good they do, it would be glad, by any help or encouragement before, or approbation and espousal after, in some sort to make its own. But as for the Evil, in regard both to God, and our selves, it can have no more to do with it, than to declare against it, or to pity and admonish him that doth it. *Have no Fellowship with them,* says the Apostle, or no † joint share and communication, in the works of darkness, but rather reprove them, Eph. 5. 11. And as for those things, that call down the wrath of God, be not ye partakers of them, v. 6, 7. And like to this, is St. John's warning to the Elect Lady and her Children, against the Bringers of Damnable Doctrines, when they meet them on such Errands, not so much as by a Salutation or encouraging Countenance, to be partaker of his Evil Deeds, 2 Jo. 10. 11. And that of St. Paul to Timothy, to keep himself pure, and not to be partaker of other mens sins, 1 Tim. 5. 22. Come out of her my People, saith God to his Church for this purpose,

† συνκοινωνία.
synkoinōnía.

suppose, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her Plagues, Rev. 18. 4. But in the Rules of worldly Wisdom, this is otherwise. For tho' it has no Kindness, or smack to the sin; yet 'tis Prudence in its account, either in reality, or appearance, to take part with the times: And so, if any way of wickedness comes back'd, and driven on by Authority, or the Heat and Fury of the Populace, such men will take their part therein, as Ungodly Temporizers. Or, if the Wickedness comes to them, dress'd up in Self-interest, and Secular Advantage; tho' they would not take part with the sin, yet they are for taking part of the Profit, and so countenance, encourage, or assist the sin, for the sake of that, thinking in the mean time, whilst they come in thus for the Profits, they lay the Guilt at other mens doors; and leave it to be answer'd for, by the Principals and Authors themselves. Thus, instead of getting out of the way, and keeping off from any Ungodly, or Unrighteous Course, as Religion we see requires, their Study is, to come as near to it, as they can. And, tho' they cannot swallow it in its gross, and openly and directly act therein; yet to fetch a compass, and give it all the By-Favours, and secret Stroakings that come in their way, by covert participation.

'Tis not without Grief of Heart, and true Christian Compassion, that I have observed, how many of the more hopeful and well disposed minds, have splin upon this Rock, and, as I think, criminally partook in those things, which themselves have freely condemned; salving all in

in the mean while, to their own Consciencies, because they kept their hands free from being the direct and principal Actors. But if what they did, made them Accessaries and Partakers, and the Partakers are involved in Guilt and Punishment, with the Principals and Actors, in any irreligious and unrighteous Business, what are they the better for this? If thereby they burden their own Souls, and make them answerable and punishable for the Offence; 'tis but cold comfort, if the Punishment doth come at all, to distinguish upon what account it comes: whether, for our having done the thing our selves; or, for making our selves Parties with them that did it, when done by others. I think it would be an acceptable Service to God; and true Charity to all Persons at any time concern'd herein, to awaken their Consciencies in this Point, by setting down the chief and most usual ways, of partaking in those sins, whereof others are the main Actors. And this I shall endeavour to do for them, that being aware thereof, neither the Bait and Prospect of worldly Advantages, nor Temporizing and Obsequiousness to any Command of Princes, or Popular Heat and Vulgar Cries for an ill thing, may ever carry them to share in other mens Guilt, and partake in what, not only the Law of God, but their own Consciencies do condemn.

Besides the immediate Actors, who perform the Execution thereof, these following are all Partakers in any impious or unrighteous thing, against either God or Men, and share the Guilt among them.

1. *First,*

First, he shares in the Guilt, *qui jubet, that* and Commands it; which is the Guilt of Superiors, as of a Magistrate, Master, or Parent. Commanders of an evil thing, are not only Parties, but Authors of the wickedness they en-
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Not only their own Motion lies at their doors, as proceeding from the naughtiness of their own Hearts, but also the wickedness of others. For their Subjects, move not of themselves; nay, if they make conscience of what they do, they must first force both their inclination, and their consciences: but only in dread of their Power and Command, or meely in Obedience. And therefore to them doth the Voice of God more eminently, and especially charge such Actions. As, *the † slaying of the 85*

† 1 Sam. 22. 17, 18.

And *the Murder of Uriah, to † David; and Naboth, to † Ahab and Jezebel: because, by Letters, they had required and given Order* to them.

† 2 Sam. 11. 15. & c. 12. 9.
 † 1 King. 21. 8, 9,

But this Guilt of Superiors, is then most heinous and consummate, when shewn, not only in Personal mandates; but in establishing wicked Constitutions, or publickly decreeing, and requiring from all their Subjects, any impious, unrighteous, or otherwise unlawful things; so propagating ungodliness, and breach of all good Conscience, among all their Subjects, that have not the Piety, or Spirit, to stand out against their sinful Injunctions. *Wo unto them that Decree unrighteous Decrees,* says God, *Is. 10. 1.* Upon them lies, not only the load of their own Personal Guilts; but also the Guilt of all their Subjects,

10. & v. 19, 23, 24.

in

in such Actions: Whose Criminal Compliance and Obedience, though it fall upon themselves, yet doth not rest there, but rebounds back from each to their unrighteous Rulers, since it was only in regard to them, and in fear of their Power and Displeasure, that they became Guilty. So that in them, who were at the head of the wicked Act, and would force all the rest, yea, though against their own Mind and Conscience, to transgress therein, doth the Guilt of each Offender concenter and unite. As the Guilt of all Israel, in following Jeroboam's Calves, and Unrighteous Worship, did

† 1 King.

12. 30, 31.

&c. 13.

33, 34.

† 1 King.

15. 30. &

2 King. 10.

29.

† him, who, as the Scripture says, † made Israel to sin thereby, and set up, and by Law enforced that impious and idolatrous Worship.

So that in truth, the greater the numbers are that comply with such Decrees, and perform their unconscionable and unlawful injunctions; the more have such imposers of wickedness, to throw guilt upon their heads, and to heap up Vengeance for them, and their Posterities. And their only true and real Friends, though here they are persecuted as their worst Enemies, are they that honestly and religiously stand out, and stick true and firm to the Truths or Laws of God, against them. For, whilst all others, against the Great Day of Audit, are placing new Debts to their Score, and inflaming the final Reckoning; these spare them. And, by preserving their own uprightness, hinder more Guilt and Condemnation from being set to their Account, who, without any addition from them, are like, God knows, from the

compliances of others, their seeming friends
 herein, but real Destroyers, to have infinitely
 more than ever they will be able to bear, or
 account for.

2. Secondly, he partakes in the Guilt, *qui non*
rehabitet; who, when he is in Place and Station for
 to do so, doth not duly shew himself, to stop and pre-
 vent it.

1. Sometimes, Men have the Power in their
 hands, as Eli had, both as a Magistrate and
 Parent, over his Sons, either to Cure and Re-
 dress, or exemplarily to punish their shameful
 things. And if they neglect to use this Power,
 in Restraint or Punishment, they partake in
 their Sins, which such impunity has encouraged.
 Thus God † charges Eli with his Son's wicked-
 ness, and punishes him for it, as well as them.
 And tells the Magistrates, that any ways connive
 at him that gives his Seed to Moloch, and do not
 punish him; that he will set his face, not only
 against that Man, but against his Family, or
 the People of his Place; the word Family some-
 times, (as Jer. 8. 3. Mich. 2. 3.) signifying the
 same as People, the People of a place antiently
 being reckon'd to some one Family, as if they
 had all sprung from it, as Gen. 10. 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.
Contra Auxiliatores, vel obfirmatores ejus, as 'tis
 under'd in the Chaldee Paraphrase; i. e. against
 themselves, who by not punishing, may be said to
 confirm the ungodly in his impiety, as Grotius
 there notes: And all that go a whoring after,
 or, as the Septuagint, † Consent to him, as, by
 conniving and not punishing, they were inter-
 preted to do, Lev. 20. 4, 5. And St. Paul blames
 the,

† 1 Sam.
 2. 29, 30.
 & c. 3. 13.

† ὁμο-
 νοῦντας.

the *Pastors* at *Corinth*, as coming in for a share of Guilt with the incestuous Person, because they had not mourned to have him taken away, i. e. proceeded to Excommunication, which, in those days, used to be with Mourning and Lamentation, as at Funerals, 1 Cor. 5. 1, 2. 6. Such also was the case of *Gallio* the Deputy of *Achaia*, who, when he sat to keep the Peace, and do Justice, suffer'd *Softhenes* to be beaten even before the Judgment Seat, by a Popular outrage, and cared for none of those things, as the Text says, *Acts* 18. 12. 17. When Rulers can look on, and see ill things done, without exerting the Power they are intrusted with, to curb and restrain them; or, give liberty and connivance, as *Gallio* did, nay, perhaps, encouragement to Rabbles, to act their Outrage and unjust Violence, either for punishing, or curbing those they would willingly see brought down: by not giving check to these wickednesses, they make them their own, and become answerable to God for them.

2. Sometimes, as when 'tis lodged in a certain number or Body of Men; they are only sharers in Power, and to act in Concurrence with others, by common Consent and Opinion. And each one partakes here in any unlawful thing that passes among them, unless he openly interpose and protest against it, or visibly manifest his dissent from it. For what is decreed, or done at such Meetings, is all by their Authority, and in all their Names. And when the Debate comes, whether any particular thing shall pass as their Act or no, they sit there to speak their minds. And

And if they gainsay it not, it goes as if it were their mind; and by such silence it comes to effect, and they give as much Authority thereto, as if they had expressly consented. If an unrighteous thing is proposed, and waits for their consent; if they suffer it to pass on without their denial, it appears they were either for promoting, or permitting it. They did not prohibit it when they could, and when they were put thereupon. And *qui non prohibet, quando potest, ac debet, jubet*, says the Rule: by not prohibiting, they authorised; their not gainsaying, in Moral estimate, is consenting to it. They are used to do there, what they do visibly. And if then they do not visibly disclaim, and cast out such an unlawful thing; they visibly approve, or give way to it. † *He that is not against us, is on* † *Mar. 9.*
our Part, holds true in this case. That is, when 40.
 nothing is sought to be carryed by any helps, by this saying, he is got over to its side, who, when he might, will not hinder or oppose it.

Accordingly, when any such thing passes, the construction is, as having every ones Consent, if one gainsays it. Thus it is said, of the *Company*, or *College and Council of Priests*, whose there was so Great in the *Jewish Judicatories*, that they *Murder'd with one Shoulder or Consent*: because, if any of them had any dislike, or inclinations to justice in any Persons case, he kept them to himself, and, for ends, gave way to what injustice the rest decreed, not openly dissenting from it, *Hos. 6. 9.* And therefore *Joseph of Arimathea*, that Good and just Counsellor, as the Scripture styles him, when he was against the Judg-

ment of the rest of the Council, in the cause of Christ, shewed them he did not partake therein, by his open dissent from it. *He had not consented to the Council and Deed of them,* saith St. Luke, but had given his opinion and voice against it: openly owning afterwards the innocence of that just Person, and going in to beg the Body of Pilate, Luke 23. 50, 51, 52. 'Tis not then for men in such Stations, thro' timorousness, or politick considerations, to conceal themselves, when unrighteous, or unconscionable things, are going on. Their connivance and Permission, who are in Place and under obligation of Prohibiting, brings Guilt upon them: and, by not forbidding and opposing, they partake in the evils which are done.

3. Sometimes again, tho' they are in no place of Power, to coerce and restrain; yet they are in place of Teachers and Monitors, to admonish and give warning. This is the case of Ministers, who from this are styled Watch-men, Ezek. 33. 7. and c. 3. 17. *Watching for your Souls, as they that must give an account,* as St. Paul speaks, Heb. 13. 17. Their Care, and Calling, is to keep out sin, or to Reform it: so if others sin, thro' their neglect, or fault, they are more especially accountable for it.

They are more particularly Guilty of the sins of those committed to them, when their People either fall into any impious, or unrighteous way, or thing, or continue therein:

1. First, For want of their giving them warning. *Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them*

from me, says God to the Watchman, Ezek. 3. 17. and c. 33. 7. they must not take the word of their Preaching, from any appearance of humane Advantages, or serviceableness of any way to Secular Purposes; from its being set on by the arm of Authority, the heat of People, and cry of the times; which is not to hear it from God's mouth, but from carnal suggestions. But if it is a breach of the mind or will of God; however desirable that way may seem on those worldly accounts, as his Ministers, they must speak his word, not the World's, and in his Name declare against it. And if any perish at such times, for want of their giving warning, God declares he will exact his Blood at their hands. When I lay a stumbling Block, or Opportunity and Temptation to fall from any Righteous way, before a Righteous Man; if he turn from his Righteousness, and commit Iniquity, because thou hast not given him warning, his Blood will I require at thy hand, Ezek. 3. 20. Or, when a wicked man, that is already plunged in Sin and Death, continues therein, for that thou blowest not the Trumpet, and givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life: his blood will I require at thine hand, v. 18. and c. 33. 6. 8.

The Ministers work is to save Souls alive, by the ministry of the Word. And if any Souls dye, for want of the word; their death is owing to a want in his ministration: and he is guilty of the blood of Souls, by not speaking the word, or being silent. His giving warning, is necessary, as God says in Ezekiel, as to save his Peoples, so

to deliver his own Soul, c. 3. 19. and c. 33. 9. And St. Paul says, they must keep back nothing that is profitable for them, Acts 20. 20. but declare to them the whole counsel of God, that they may be pure from the blood of all men, v. 26, 27. But of all other times, it is not for them to hold their tongues, when danger and temptation comes. Then their Flocks need most of all to have, and take warning; and therefore then are they more especially bound to give it. When those ways of death are recommended to them, the Word is most necessary to keep them alive; and therefore then especially the Ministers thereof are to administer it. When the Watchmen seeth the sword coming, then is he at his peril, saith God, to blow the Trumpet, and warn the People of it, Ezek. 33. 6. When he seeth the Wolf coming, i. e. any terror or wolfish Cruelty, to force on an ill thing, then is his time to call out to the Sheep, and by the greater fears of Religion, to guard them the best he can against it, as we learn from our Lord, Joh. 10. 11, 12.

2. Secondly, Through their misleading them, if they do not only fail to warn them from an ill way, but go before them therein. The Shepherd is to lead out his sheep, and go before them; and they are to follow him, as our Lord says, Joh. 10. 4. And their going wrong must therefore be more especially chargeable on him that leads them wrong; the straying of the Flocks, imputed to the straying of the Guides. Especially, when they lead them wrong, in the Ministries of their Function and in the very house of God send up from themselves, and their Congrega-

gregations, such an Offering, as, instead of honouring God, shall prophane him. This God mightily resented among the Jews. Both Prophet and Priest are prophane, yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord, concerning the Prophets, Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the Prophets of Jerusalem is prophaneness gone forth into all the Land, Jer. 23. 11. 15. These ways, if their People follow, and are led by them, turn even their piety into prophaneness. Or, if they see through them, and discern the Pollution, it makes the Lord's People to transgress, or *ἀναστρέφω* *ἀναστρέφω*, as the Septuagint render it, i. e. it makes them refrain or forbear God's service; yea, to abhor the Offering of the Lord, which God took so heinously at Ely's Sons, and sets down as a special aggravation of their wickedness, 1 Sam. 2. 17. 24.

And thus it is, when the Ministers of God shall go before the People, in an idolatrous or superstitious worship. Or in prostituting and prophaning of Prayers and Praises, to immoral uses, (immorality and injustice being as certainly abominable to God in worship, as superstition is;) applying all the Solemnities of Prayer and Thanksgiving, to the countenancing and carrying on of wicked and unrighteous things. As the Jews, who, whilst they were going on in the greatest immoralities, as Theft, Murder, Perjury, &c. would in the midst thereof recommend themselves and their ways to God, in his own house, (so prophaning the most sacred Services of Religion,

ligion, to credit and set off their wickedness) and say, we are deliver'd to Do, or, as the Syriack deliver us, O Lord, whilst we are Doing all these abominations. By which prophane usage, his house, as he says, was become a den of Robbers, or a place to protect, to shew forth, and carry on injustice, in their eyes, Jer. 7. 9, 10, 11. Or, when they go before them, in horribly perverting the Solemnities of Repentance, their Fastings and Humiliations, not to cure, but to carry on their unrighteousness. As the Lord complained of the Jews, who fasted for unjust strife and debate, and to smite, not in a righteous cause, but with the fist of wickedness: not with intent to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke, (or depraved judgment and sentence, as the Chaldee;) nor to loose the bands of wickedness, i. e. tied on by the Congregation of wicked Judges, in fraud of the innocent, as from the Chaldee Grotius notes; but to bind those bands still faster on, Isa. 58. 4. 6. Or, lastly, when they shall lead them on in gross hypocrisie and dissimulation, uttering those desires or affections to God in words, which they neither have themselves, nor would have others to have, in their hearts: which may come under the sending forth hypocrisie through the Land, or gross dissimulation and plain mockery of God, that, according to the rendring of the margin, is so severely threatned, Jer. 23. 15. When the Ministers of God, who, in Prayers and Devotions, are the mouths of the People, shall by these, or any other ways, put ill things into their mouths, and lead them on, not in a pure, but in a polluted and prophane Service; or otherwise,

therwise, in any wicked, or unrighteous thing: they are accountable for their followers, as well as for themselves; and must expect to share in their Peoples unrighteousness or impiety, as well as to bear the burthen of their own.

3. *Thirdly, Through false Doctrine*, when they teach them to *† take darkness for light*, preach *† Isa. 5. 20.* peace where they should denounce judgements: and so, either at first seduce, or afterwards strengthen and confirm them in any ungodly, or unrighteous thing. This is like to be the consequence of the former. For, if once the Guides go before the People in an unlawful thing, their practice will be headed by a Doctrine, to call in others, and to justify and bear out both what their People and themselves have done. And thus to teach Men to sin, is to be guilty of their sins with a witness. *He that shall break the least of these Commandments, and shall teach men so; shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 19.* And thus it is, when the Ministers of Christ instruct and hearten on their followers, to do any thing contrary to right and justice, to Christian simplicity, truth, and faithfulness, to their Promises or Oaths, to the Duties they owe God, or God's Vicegerents, or to any Commandment, respecting either God, our Neighbour, or our selves.

This teaching others to go against the obligation of any of God's Laws, is commonly by distinguishing away a Duty, so to shorten and abridge it, that it shall not reach us. Or to blanch and varnish over our own actions with pallia-

tions, or fair Pleas and Pretences of excuse, that they may not be thought to oppose, or infringe it. This pains, in making such Fig. leave covers for moral Nakedness, and starting plausible Palliations for foul Practices, God taxes as *daubing* in the false Prophets. One, that is the People, *Built a Wall*, says he, viz. of ill manners: and loe! others, i. e. the false Prophets whom he there accuses, *Daubed it with untempered Mortar*, i. e. palliated or blanch'd it over with fair Colours and Pretences, that thro these, as Grotius notes, *men might not see the filthiness of their Vices*, Ezek. 13. 10.

Such was their Pretence, who bore the Jews in hand, that the securing of Religion, or of Gods Temple and Service, would defend and warrant them in any Acts of immorality and unrighteousness. The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, was what they had to oppose, as a sufficient defensative, against all denunciations of judgments, for *perversion of Justice*; and which therefore God tells them were *lying words*, and would fail those that relied on them, Jer. 7. 4. 8. And when there was nothing but Bribery and Corruption, the Heads judging for Reward, and the Priests teaching for hire, and the Prophets Divining for Money: yet would they say, *none evil can come upon us*, and that leaning on the Lord, because the Lord is amongst us, Mich. 3. 11. And this Grotius conceives was the Salvo of those false Prophets of Jerusalem, who so strengthened the hands of evil-Doers, that none returned from his wickedness; viz. as he explains it, by flattering them in their vices, and promising things prosperous, because

because of the Temple, and the House of David, Jer. 23. 14. These Salvos and Palliations, they would still start anew, as, in the way they were engaged in, any came to need them, and fit them to every ones case. Which God, in Ezekiel, calls making Kerchifs, or Vales, for every Stature, i. e. as he Comments, fair Pretences to cover the sins both of great and small, Ezek. 13. 18. And these base flatteries, to please and bolster up Sinners, St. Paul absolutely disclaims thro' the whole course of his Ministry. Neither at any time used we flattering words, courting favour by speaking pleasing things, or suiting our Preaching and Doctrines to the humours or necessities of Men, like the temporizing Gnosticks, 1 Thess. 2. 5.

These Palliations and Pretences they would still change, as put to it by new necessities. Or, go off from one, when it was sore pressed, or seem'd more weak, to another that could promise to help them better out, and was thought able to bear up that wicked or unrighteous Act which they sought to defend by it. And accordingly, of the False Prophets, the Spirit of God observes, that they caused his People to err, as by their Lyes, so by their Lightness. Still shifting Principles and Pretences, as serving turns and necessities did inforce; thinking and saying, now this thing, and anon that, very unconstantly, as Vatablus explains it, Jer. 23. 32.

And by such Salvos and deceitful Pretences, shifted as oft as their Necessities or new Tryals would require it, they bolstered up Sinners in their sins, and made their Consciences be at ease in the way

way of their unrighteousness. This God stile, *sewing Pillows under the Elbows*, it being a way to make take their sins soft and easie, whereupon to settle and rest themselves; and for which he denounces *War* against the false Prophetesses, Ezek. 13. 18. Or, at other times, *speaking Peace* to them, to whom *no Peace*, but terror and indignation doth belong. As the false Prophets did, against whom God declares, that *his hand should be upon them*; and that *they should not be in the Assembly of his People*, or place of teaching any more; nor *their Names stand in the Roll of Israel*; nor *they ever return into their Country again*, as others should at the end of the Captivity: *because, even because, they have seduced my People, † saying Peace, and there was no Peace*, Ezek. 13. 9, 10.

† Jer. 23.
17.

Now, when the *Ministers of Christ*, and *Guides of Souls*, shall not only by neglect of warning, contribute to the *Peoples sin*; but shall come, moreover, themselves at any time to lead them on by *Example and Doctrine*, and *speak Peace* to them therein; it makes a deplorable State, and must needs make a sad reckoning. For,

I. This must needs draw the *People by Troops* into unrighteous ways; and prevent their return from them. Especially, if it happen that they have a great appearance of present ease and interest in this world, to draw them on: as well as the *Authority and Doctrine* of their *Guides*, to justify them therein. So that by this means they will be answerable for the sinning, and sinful persisting of their *People and Followers*; which will lye not only at the *Peoples*, but also at their *Teachers Doors*. Thus God charges those

those Prophets, who, by starting Salvos for un-
 righteous Actions, or † dawbing for sinners, or †
 giving Pillows, had made them hope for Life in † v. 10.
 these ways; that they had strengthened the hands of † v. 18.
 the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked
 way, *Ezek. 13. 22.* And this again he lays to the
 charge of the Prophets of Jerusalem, that by
 their Lyes and Adulteries, or Adulterations and
 falsifications of their Duty in these points, by
 such Salvos, they had strengthened the hands of
 evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness.
 Which he cries out of as an horrible thing, and
 for which he says, they are all of them as abomi-
 nable to him as Sodom, *Jer. 23. 14.* Whereas,
 had they in the day of tryal stood firm, and had
 caused his People to hear his words; then they
 should have turned them from their evil way, and
 from the evil of their doings, v. 22.

And by drawing them into sin, and de-
 taining them therein, it throws them into
 death and destruction, which lays their blood, as
 the Scripture says, at the Watchmens doors. For
 whether it be with, or without warning, that
 the People come into the ways of death; 'tis
 death still, which is at the end thereof. The same
 wicked man shall dye in his iniquity, though thou
 givest no warning, saith God, *Ezek. 3. 18.* he
 shall dye in his sin, v. 20. and c. 33. 8. Though
 the false Prophets deceived them, as *Jeremiah*
 † suggested to God in their excuse; yet shall † v. 13.
 the People fall into ruine, and I will pour their
 wickedness upon them, *Jer. 14. 16.* When the blind
 are led by the blind, saith our Saviour, or a
 blind People by blind Guides, both shall fall into
 the

the ditch, Mat. 15. 14. The People at such times are generally misled by false Guides, because they wish for such, and will hear no others. The Providence of God leaves them not utterly destitute of faithful Monitors, but they turn a deaf ear to them. They are bent upon wicked and unrighteous ways, and love to be flatter'd and bolster'd up therein: yea, too oft, God knows, are ready to bite and devour any that shall freely and faithfully reprehend them. And this makes their Guides to lean to flattering Doctrines; to do, and say, what will please, not what should profit. So that here is a circle in sin: they first lead, or drive their Guides, and then are led by them. And if they will be thus misled into destructive courses, it is at their own peril. They are misled into death, as well as into dangers: their being misled will burthen and condemn their leaders; but will not clear and excuse themselves.

3. It casts, as the People, so the Guides and Ministers themselves, into daily and new trains of sin. The way of virtue and uprightness is uniform, and always the same: but there is nothing, but variety without end, in folly and wandering. When once men give way to make false steps; after they have made one, they will soon be call'd upon to make another, and never know when to give over. It is in *ill ways*, as it is in *ill reasonings*, there is a nearness and connexion among them: and once grant one *wicked method*, which is a *moral absurdity*, and, according to the Rule, *dato uno absurdo infinita sequuntur*, infinite more will follow it. Thus
God

God tells the false Prophets, who strengthened the hands of the evil doers, by their unrighteous shifts and Salvos, that, having got thus upon an ill bottom, and in unrighteous ways, their way should be unto them as slippery ways, wherein they would not be able to hold their feet; and that also in the darkness, where they would not have light enough to see where they might make the next step; and after all, that in this way they should be driven on. And numerous must their falls be, who are posted on from thing to thing, and all in a way where they have no light, and most unsure footing, Jer. 23. 12.

It also intraps, and punishes them in these sins. By taking these false ways, they do not usually escape, but meet their fears; and, instead of getting from, run into troubles and calamities. Their false ways, and flattering hopes, and talk of deliverance from threatned evils, God turns into real overthrow by them. Thus, of those Prophets, that would promise deliverance by their own false ways, and fancied grounds, to a People that did not put away, but hold fast their unrighteousness, and perversions of justice, and say the sword and famine shall not be in this land; by sword, and famine, shall those Prophets be consumed, saith God, Jer. 14. 15. And to those false Prophets, whose study lay in excusing and blanching over sins, by unfound pretences and palliations, or daubing the wall with untemper'd mortar, as 'tis call'd in Ezekiel, God declares, that the wall shall fall, and that they shall be consumed in the midst thereof, Ezek. 13. 14. Their ways are slippery, and dark ways, as we heard from

from the Prophet *Jeremy*, and when driven on, they shall fall therein, and have evil brought upon them, *Jer. 23. 12.*

5. It will bring them to shame, at the discovery of the rottenness, and unsoundness of their Principles. Their daubing is liken'd to untemper'd mortar, which, for want of straw, or good tempering, cannot stick long together. It will first or last be broke to pieces by God, who sets himself against it, to disgrace and overthrow it. Though it strengthen it self never so much, in names and numbers; and though men should still fall off, and the way of righteousness be forsaken of all its friends, and greatest visible supporters: yet will God never desert that way, though man doth; and when some forsake it, he will not want an instrument, but raise up others to defend it. No Combinations of men shall ever make falshood to be truth, or wrong to be right. Nor, as he told the Jewish daubers, will he allow them long to appear so, before he wash off the paint, and break down the wall, and discover the foundation of it. Say unto them that daub it with untemper'd mortar, saith he, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower, to wash it away, and hail stones shall beat it down, and a stormy wind shall rent it, *Ezek. 13. 11.* I will rent it with a stormy wind, in my fury, saith he again, *v. 13.* I will break down the wall that ye have daubed, *v. 14.* I will accomplish my fury upon the wall, and upon them that daubed it with untemper'd mortar. To wit, the Prophets of Israel, who thus plaster'd over a wall of wicked ways, with a daubing of untemper'd,

intemper'd, or unsound Salvos and Pretences, v. 15, 16. Repeating it thus often, as † Calvin † ad v. 14. notes, because the People were so strangely bewitched with these fair covers and palliations. These Principles, as he continues to add, shall be lost and buried: I will say unto you, the wall is no more, nor they that daubed it, v. 15. They shall be laid so bare, so openly detected, and universally condemned, as to turn into a reproach and by-word. When the wall is fallen, shall it be said unto you, where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? v. 12.

6. Lastly, To compleat the sad consequences of such falls, in the Guides of Souls, as they are thus full of guilt, so are they, on the other side, of all others the most empty of hopes, and appearances of cure. The Ministers of Christ are the reformers of manners; like the salt, as our * Lord compares them, saying, ye * Mat. 5. are the salt of the earth, which is to season all other things, and keep out putrefaction and rottenness. If the People sin then, the Guides are set to season and amend them. But when the Guides themselves are fallen, to lead others on, and teach them unrighteous ways; what so likely means is there left, for their new seasoning, and reformation? If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, there being no use for insipid salt, but is to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men, was the saying of our Lord, Mat. 5. 13. Have salt in your selves, therefore, is well added in St. Mark, since, when the savour is once lost, it is so hard to restore it, Mar. 9. 50.

By

By these things it may appear, how the *Guides of Souls*, who are in place of warning and instructing, and *Magistrates*, or Men in power, who are in Authority of punishing or restraining, may partake of other mens sins, by not prohibiting.

3. *Thirdly*, He partakes in the guilt, *qui ministrat*, that acts in subordination under an higher Power, or *ministers in an unlawful business*.

The *Roman Law* was more favourable to persons under Command, imputing the action, not to the inferior, who was but as the instrument, but to the superior, who required, and was the Author of it. To that purpose are these rules of Law. *Velle non creditur, qui obsequitur imperio Patris, vel Domini.* * *Reg. Juris* 4. *ex Ulpiano.* *Is damnum dat, qui jubet dare; ejus vero nulla culpa est, cui parere necesse sit.* † *Reg. Jur.* 169. *è Paulo.* Particularly as to *Servants*, they were so much under their Masters power and command, as not to be accounted a separate head in Law, nor was an action to be commenced either by them, or against them. *Cum servo nulla actio est.* * *Reg. Jur.* 107. *è Gaio.* *Ad ea, que non habent Atrocitatem facinoris, vel sceleris, ignoscitur servis, si vel Dominis, vel his qui vice Dominorum sunt, (veluti tutoribus,) obtemperaverint.* † *Reg.* 157. *ex Ulpiano.*

But as to the account of Conscience and Religion, *Christ* tells his followers, that they must be no Mans Servant in a forbidden thing. For he that is call'd, being another Man's Servant, is call'd to be the Lord's Free man, and must be

* *ad Cal.
cem Just.
instic.*

p. 219.
† *Ib.* p.
236.

* *Ib.* p.
230.

† *Ib.* p.
23.

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Chap. IX. *Of Partaking in the Sins of others.*

207

at liberty to serve him. Being bought with a price, they must not be the Servants of Men, 1 Cor. 7. 22, 23. Among those that are baptised into Christ, there is no difference of bond or free, but the same Rule of living, and way to Heaven for both, Gal. 3. 27, 28. Col. 3. 10, 11. So that the Pretence of being under Authority, and acting in subordination, must never carry any Christian against any of his Lord's Precepts. If it is an unlawful thing, as a Christian, or as Christ's Servant, he cannot minister therein. And if, notwithstanding the voice of his heavenly Lord to the contrary, in regard to an earthly Lord, he will yield to minister and act in it: he dips his hands in the guilt thereof, and is answerable for it. Wo to them, saith God, not only that decree unrighteous decrees, as Judges and Rulers; but also to them, that write grievousness, or, as the margin, to the writers that write grievousness, i. e. the Scribes, that write down and promulge what in justice the other have prescribed, Isa. 10. 1. Thus the Captains of fifties and their Companies, who would go upon the impious errand, of apprehending the Lords Prophet, were guilty, and punished accordingly, as well as he that sent them, 1 King. 1. 9, 10, 11, 12. And one thing among others of higher Nature, whereby the Scripture expresses Judas's partaking with the Jews in that Wickedness, is his being Guide to them that took Jesus, Act. 1. 16. Accordingly, the Apostolical + Canons punish Christians, for performing ministerial services, as carrying Oyl, and lighting the Lamps in the Gentile Temples, or Jewish Synagogues. And on the invasion of the Goths, and

+ Can. 71.

P

other

other Barbarians, who fill'd those parts of the Empire with Spoils and Murders, the *Canons* of *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus*, (confirmed by the 6. *Gen. Council in Trullo*, *Can. 2.*) Censure those Christians, who, tho' under their power as their Captives taken by them before, would yield to come along with the Barbarians in these incur-

† ἡρώδης
υἱῶν δὲ
ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ
ὁδὸς ἀγ-
νοῶν τοῖς
βασιλεῦσι
St. Greg.
Thaumat.
Can. 7.

sions, so & shew them the ways, or houses, which the others were ignorant of.

4. Fourthly, He is a sharer in the Guilt, *Qui adjuvat*, who not only Ministers under another, as an inferior, whereof before; but, as an Equal or Complice, helps it forward. He that will freely furnish out necessaries, or do his part to bring it about, or any way help another to Sin, therein Sins with him.

Thus it is,

When they will put their Forces, or Furniture, to his, as to a common stock, by a joynt Supply to accomplish and bring it about. *Cast in thy Lot with us, let us all have one Purse*: was the Voice of those that invited others to come in for a share in their Wickedness, *Prov. 1. 14.*

When they are to be Partakers in, and have a Dividend of the Profit. The Receiver, as we use to say, is as Bad as the Thief. And when thou sawest a Thief, thou consentedst with him; or, by accepting a Proffer'd share of his Gettings, camest in to be a Consenter, or Complice in his wickedness, *Pf. 50. 18.*

When they are Partners with them, in their Counsels, Cares, and Studies, to bring their wickedness to effect. Thus in the Psalmist it follows, and hast been Partaker with the Adulterers, one intrusted

intrusted with their Counsels, and laying thy head together with theirs, for the accomplishment of their Lusts. This is being of their Club, and coming in to the Confederacy and Counsel of the wicked: which is the way, not only to partake in the ill they Do; but to lose all Remains of Virtue and Goodness, and come to be as bad as they. If Designers of ill, shall form themselves in Bodies, and meet to Consult, and Carry on their Ungodly, and Unrighteous ways; it is high time, for all that would keep innocent, to stand off, and look to themselves. The warning of Jacob, is the best Advice that can be given in this Case. *O my Soul, Come not thou into their Secret, and unto their Assembly, mine Honour be not thou united, Gen. 49. 6.* Such Complices may have their several Posts in acting; but, being all Privy to the thing, and acting in their Respective Stations to help it on, they are all as one man in the Sin. *Raul* was a Principal in the Death of *Stephen*, tho his Part was not to throw a Stone, but to keep the Payment of those that slew him, *Act. 22. 20.* Being all ingaged in the same Cause, tho some may have a different task therein; as his part is, that goeth down to the Battel, so shall his part be that carryeth by the Stuff, saith *David*, they shall part alike, *1 Sam. 30. 24.* And agreeable to this, is the 71. Canon of *St. Basil* ad *Amphilochium*, decreeing equal Punishment, to the *συμμεταίτιος*, those that are conscious or Complices; as to the *εργάται*, the Actors and Effectors of any Wickedness.

When they Perswade to it: for to Perswade an ill thing, is to bear a Part in it. As *Eve*

did Adam, to eat of the forbidden Fruit; who was taxed, not only for her own, but for his Sin, and for being first in the Transgression, Gen. 3. 16, 17. and 1 Tim. 2. 12, 14. And as Jezebel was, for the wickedness of Ahab, because she stirred him up to it, 1 King. 21, 25. And if, by importunities, they urge and weary those to Do a Wicked or Unjust thing, who are timorous, or backward and unwilling to Do it of themselves: they shew more Malice, and come in to Partake higher, and be Deeper in Guilt, than the very Actors. So our Saviour speaks, in the Case between the Jews, and Pilate: they urging and importuning him to Crucifie our Lord, against his own Desire and judgment. *He that delivered me unto thee, saith he, hath the greater Sin, Jo. 19. 11.* And so 'tis in the unjust Clamours of the Populace, (whether greater or lesser Vulgar) when, at any time, they seek to terrifie and overawe Magistrates and Judges, and, under the Name of demanding Justice, call for the greatest iniquity, and unjust Violence: which brings all the innocent Blood, that is thereby shed, upon their own heads.

When they furnish out Provisions for it: as still to set on strong Drink before those, who, as they plainly see, Design to be intemperate; or, lend a Sword to one whom they perceive intending to commit Murder therewith; or, bring a man a burning Coal wherewith to Fire the Temple; or willingly to furnish out, and equip a Person any other ways, for a wicked and unrighteous Business. This Administring of Furniture and Provision, for an Unlawful Act, is

to

to partake in it. For those are a necessary help, without which the Actor, as wanting matter to sin withal, would not be able to fulfil his Lust; and so will readily own himself beholding to them for it. † *Make no Provision for the flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof,* is a Rule to keep clear of Sin, either in our selves, or others. The Law requiring us to *Love our Neighbour, as we do our selves;* and no more to set on fire, or help out an unlawful Deed, in their Case, than in our own.

† Ro. 13.
14.

When they *Express Good wishes, and Pray for success to it.* For, since Events depend most on Providence, Prayers to God are among the highest Assistances: And a man cannot shew a more real Concern and Espousal of any Act, than by Endeavouring the best he can to engage God for it. *He that bids him God speed, is Partaker of his Evil Deeds,* says St. John, 2 Jo. 11.

When they go out *Lovingly to Meet and Welcome them, or Friendly Harbour and Receive those in their Houses,* who are going upon ungodly, or unrighteous Errands. This shews their heart goes along, and that they are ready to further, as it falls in their way, and take part with them. Thus, *Jehonadab's heart being Right with Jehu's,* is set off by his coming to Meet him, 2 King. 10. 15. And, *Receive not the bringer of false Doctrine into your Houses,* saith St. John, when he Cautions against Partaking in his Evil Deeds, 2 Jo. 10. 11. And thus, on the Canon of St. Basil, equallizing the Complices or conscious, to the Actors of a wicked business, † *Balsamon notes, that he, who Hides and Harbours a Thief, is a Thief in the account*

† ad Can.
71. S. Ba-
fil. ad Am-
philoch.

† ὁμολογῶν-
τας αὐτοῦ.

of the Civil Law. And those, who were studious to conceal and shelter the man who had offered his seed to Moloch, or to hide their eyes from discovering him, the Law taxes as going a whoring after him, or, as the Septuagint, † Consenting and thinking the same with him, Lev. 20. 4, 5. Fifthly, he partakes in the Guilt, *Qui approbat*, that is pleased with an ill thing, or *Applauds* and *Defends* it, or him that doth it. For this shews such a mans Heart is a Party, tho his hand was not: and that he wants only opportunity, and temptation to Do the like. And by Approving afterwards, he confirms him that did the Deed; and encourages him to persist therein, or to go on. Nay, such come in oftentimes, not only as Partakers; but, by way of aggravation, as being worse than the Principals and Actors: these ingaging themselves therein without the others Temptations, which may plead some infirmity; and that argues them to have more Malice, and to be more fully bent on the Wickedness. So, in the rank of Sinners, these are set higher by St. Paul: not only Do the same, but have Pleasure in those that Do them, Ro. 1. 32.

Such are

He that inwardly delights, and takes Complacency in a wicked, or unrighteous Act: which is to take part thereof, in Will and Affection. And this is one thing, whereby the Scripture expresses Saul's Partaking in St. Stephen's Murder. And Saul was οὐνευδοκῶν, approving and well pleased with it, or Consenting to his Death, Act. 8. 1. It is what the Apostle so severely Censures in the Romans, that

that what ill they did not act themselves, they were glad of, and had Complacency in; when they saw, or heard it done by others. Not only Do the same, but take Pleasure in those that Do them, Ro. 1. 32. *Quid refert, says † Cicero, † Philip. 2. utrum voluerim fieri, an gaudeam Factum?* 'Tis the same thing, whether a man wills before to have a thing done, or rejoyces in it when it is done. The Will in both is the same: And if he did not will it before the Fact, that was only, as not being informed thereof, or asked the question.

He that Praises it. † He is as Guilty that † *Quid interest inter*
applauds, as he that Perswades to it, says Cicero. Suasorem
 Nay he comes in deeper than a meer Actor, and *facti, &*
 turns Factor for it. For to Praise, is both to *probatorem.*
 justify, and take part with him that did it; *Cic. ib.*
 and to recommend, and take part before hand with any other that shall do it. It sets off the Wickedness, not only as an innocent, but as a worthy and honourable thing: So to make the Offender, instead of turning Penitent, to grow Proud thereof; and to draw in others, (men beng naturally covetous of Honour,) to Do the same. And he, that looking on one side, will Praise the Evil, looking on the other, will be as ready to Vilifie, and Expose the contrary Good. So that such Commenders, and Extollers of Unlawful Acts, in the degrees of Guilt, may bid fair for the top of David's Scale, viz. to sit down in the Seat of the scornful, Ps. 1. 1. And thus a Commender partakes, not only when he Signalizes himself, and is particular in Praises, but if he strikes in with the common Cry, and bears a part in the popular Voice, when it is

unjustly loud, to cry up ill, or to cry down any virtuous and good things. *Had we been in the days of our Fathers, say the Scribes and Pharisees, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets, viz.* By joyning in the general Cry and Clamours for their Blood, or Applauses of those that shed it, *Mat. 23. 30.* And *St. Paul* gives it as one instance of his partaking in the death of the Saints, that, when they were put to death, he Concurred in the Popular Acclamations, and bore his part in the Common Cry, or gave his Voice against them, *Act. 26. 10.* Thus easily and unwarily may rash, or timorous and complying Persons, in Hot and Violent Times, plunge themselves in guilt, by Applauding as the number doth, and speaking well, as others about them do, of any impious or Unjust Ways or Acts, which those times shall happen to be fond of.

Next to him that thus *Praises* and *Extols*, I add him that *Justifies* and *Defends* it. Such men will maintain it, if not as meriting praises, yet, however, as innocent and blameless. To become thus a Pleader and Advocate for any wicked or Unjust Act, is highly to take the part thereof. It has many Partakers, on account of good will and inferiour assistance, among those that cannot pretend to be the Patrons and Defenders of it. He that will undertake to Defend, is no whit inferior to him that Commits a Fault; nay, in great respects beyond him. In as much, as he that Commits it may be carried on against his mind, by temptation, and infirmity of passion: but he that Defends it, is for it in mind and judgment.

Next

Next to this, he Partakes, who, though he doth not come openly and fully to Defend, yet *usily Countenances and Approves it*; so far as he joyns his will and carriage, his opinion and suffrage to the Offenders, so far he partakes in the Offence. Every expression of Approbation, in proportion to its degree, puts him into the Evil-doer's Cause, and makes it his own.

Now, such Countenance and Approbation it is, when they are kind and friendly, as I noted, in *Saluting, Entertaining, or going out to Meet him*, as he goes about the Evil Thing. Do not *Salute, or bid him God Speed, nor receive him into your houses, that ye partake not with the bringer of false Doctrine*, was the Rule given by St. John.

When they look on in the *Act*, without any *show of Horror or Dislike*, and as Men pleased and delighted with it. This is to shew Favour to an ill thing, which is to partake with it. Accordingly, St. Paul gives this as one instance of his being a Party to the death of St. Stephen, that he was *standing by, or looking on with Liking, as one Consenting to them*, *Act. 22. 20.* And therefore he directs us, when we are present thereat, to manifest Dislike, or *Reprove them in a Work of Darkness, that we may have no fellowship with it*, *Eph. 5. 11.* And thus the Fathers taught the Christians, about communicating with the Sins of the *Heathen Shows or Spectacles*. We think it no great difference, says * *Athenagoras*, whether a
 * Legat.
 man be a *Pleased Spectator*, or an *Author of the* proChrist.
Murder. Whilst *Willingly, and with Approbation* P. 38.
they behold them, they act over all the things that
 are

† De Gu-
bernator.
Dei, l. 6.
p. 191. ed.
Ox.

are done, by setting, and assenting to them, says
St. † *Salvian*.

When they would put on the outward dress, and appear like him that doth it. This is in appearance to partake with the sin, though in heart they are against it. And accordingly, to the World they appear as Actors therein, and are reputed as Parties to it. They go Halting indeed, and it may be are not what they seem. But though they do not admit the whole, they take part therein: the outward shew and form, though not the inward Sentiment and Approbation. This it to Do what *Elisha* justly reprehended, but unjustly fasten'd upon *Job*, to go in company with the workers of iniquity, and walk with wicked men: or to borrow their shape, and say and Do, shew and seem, as if a man were one of them, *Job* 34. 8. Thus did the Judaizing *Gnosticks*, who, to avoid Persecution, said they were Jews, and seemed zealous for *Moses*; but inwardly were not, nor kept the Law, (as St. * *Paul* also notes,) *Rev.* 2. 9. Thus also, as I formerly observed, were the *Libellatici* of the *Primitive Church*; who, though in truth they had done no such thing, yet sought to be numbred, and pass among those that had done sacrifice to Idols. But besides, the insincerity hereof, which I have shew'd above, this is plainly to take part with those ungodly ways, giving them the visible part and appearance, whilst the invisible is Reserved to God. It is Halting between two Opinions, as if God, who in point of Worship declares himself a jealous God, would in that Worship admit Error and Wickedness to go halves with him, and

* *Gal.* 6.
12, 13.

and be his Partners, carrying away the outward, whilst he doth the inward Service.

Lastly, he shares in the Guilt, who, though he doth not inwardly approve, nor Praise it to others, yet *deceitfully Compliments the Actor* of an impious or unrighteous thing, and *flatteringly extols it to himself*. This Carries with it the Guilt of praising an evil thing, which it doth to the Guilty person, and aggravates it with Falshood and Dissimulation, speaking therein contrary to their own Opinion. It Flatters the Offender in his Evil Way, which is to harden him in his Sin, and bar all thoughts of Repentance or Restitution, and make him not only ready, but ambitious to repeat the same again upon the next Temptation. And this is to partake in one Sin, and to prepare him for more, laying before him new snares, both of Sin and Danger. *A man that flatters his Neighbour, spreads a Net for his feet, saith Solomon, Prov. 29. 5. A flattering mouth, says he again, worketh ruine, Prov. 26. 28.* So that such a Carreling and extolling Fatterer comes in, and Partakes, as a cause, both of his sin and Fall.

6. To all these ways of Partaking in the Sins of others, may be added, lastly, the contributing thereto, by the *scandal of our Falls, or ill Examples*. All ill Examples are but too powerful in promoting ill things. Good Examples are not so successful in kindling Virtue, as bad ones are in Propagating Vice. The main Reason is, because Wickedness is more agreeable to corrupt Nature and inclination; and Virtue and Holiness are Cross to it. An ill Example leads them to follow Nature, but a good one to over-rule and subdue

subdue it. So they readily follow one, because it calls them only to please themselves, and are more hardly wrought on by the other, as calling them to Self-Denials. Which is the true Cause, why the Devil and his Servants have so many more Followers in this world, than God and his Saints: he and his instruments inviting them still to ways that pursue their fleshly Lusts and Passions, but the other to curb and restrain them.

Now the State of Mankind being thus, and corrupt Nature like tinder, most ill Examples, that are all as so many sparks of fire, will be apt to catch one or other. But then they are most unhappily influential, when ill things are committed by Parents and Magistrates, or by Men in Power and Authority over others. For then, besides their conduciveness to ends and inclinations on other accounts, they are taken up, as the way to have an air of greatness, or to gain favour, and recommend themselves; or to be like those whom Nature has made dear, or Honour great and glorious in our eyes. Or, when they are acted by Persons of note and eminence, for Wisdom and Goodness. For then they come, as having lost their illness, on a presumption no ill could come from such Actors. Nay, if they are Pillars of Truth and Piety, in deference to their Judgments, numbers of good minds are apt to distrust their own, and call in question even the plain Voice of Conscience, and the clear Sense of Good and Evil, Right, and Wrong. So that such mens Falls, never go alone, but strengthen the wicked in their

their Evil way, and shock the strong in the way of Truth, and turn the weak out thereof: Yea, they put a reproach into the mouths of its Adversaries, and make the way of Truth and Righteousness to be evil spoken of. All which, to their own, adds the sins or falls of many others. And this must accumulate guilt, and inflame reckonings. *He that by his sin, draws others, not only to sin after him, but to blaspheme, must needs precipitate others as well as himself into destruction; and so will be guilty, and answerable for as many as he has drawn into guilt with him, † says* *Salvian.*

Thus, by all these fore-mentioned ways, to omit others, may Men make themselves Guilty of others Sins. Though they are not Actors in an impious or unrighteous thing, yet if they enjoin it; or, being in Power, do not use their Power to prevent and punish it; or, in things that go by consent, if they do not expressly refuse their consent when 'tis asked; or, if Ministers, if they neglect to warn against it, or mislead their People, and go before them therein, or invent Salvo's, and unsound Palliations, to defend and bolster them up in the same. If, when in Service or subordinate Office, they Minister in an Unlawful Business, or help it forward, as Complices in Studies or Counsels, as persuading to it, or furnishing out Provisions for it, or praying for the Success thereof. If they approve of it when 'tis acted, being inwardly delighted therewith, or appearing to Praise it, or Defend it, or risibly to Countenance the Actors going about it, or stand by, and look on with Delight whilst 'tis a doing.

a doing. Or if, when really they Dislike the Fact, they yet appear to the World like one that Doth it, or Deceitfully Complement and Flatter the wicked Actors thereof. Or, lastly, if by the scandal of their ill Examples, they Draw others into Guilt, as well as themselves. By all these ways may Men, that act not the Guilty and Unrighteous Things themselves, draw others mens Guilt upon their own Heads. And 'tis the part of Spiritual Prudence, when they keep out from the Execution of any Wickedness, in the direct Act: to take care, moreover, that it do not reach them in the Rebound, and that they do not, by any of the foresaid ways, partake in their Crime, who are engaged therein.

CH A P. X.

Of Reliance on Providence, and of the Benefit Religion makes by outward Sufferings.

FROM what I have before said, of the Folly, as well as Wickedness of the First Rule of worldly Prudence about Means and Method, viz. *Doing Evil that Good may come.* I shall proceed now briefly, to note further on that Point.

3dly. A Third Rule of Spiritual Wisdom in pursuit of its ends, and that is Faith in Providence, or, in compassing any Effects, to look more to Providence, than to Humane Appearances. The great Virtue and Excellence of Religion, as well

the most general and constant exercise and employment of the Life of man, is *Faith in God*. This Faith, is a *Faith in Providence*, so far as concerns us in all the things of this Life. Our Faith also respects Futurities, and what God has promised beyond this World, in another Life. But all that God doth accomplish, and the Government thereof in this World, is the *Administration of Providence*. And all our regard to God in Earthly Affairs, seeing his hand in them, and expecting from him their desired issues, is the *Faith in Providence*. This is that which Spiritualizes this World, and turns all things that affect us here, into Religion. And this therefore is the Life of all truly Good and Religious Men. Through the whole Course of this World, they *walk in Faith*: and this Faith is in Gods Providence, which they ever look up to, and rely or build most on, in all things. Contrary to the way of the World, who, as though they walked without God in it, look not in every thing to the *Living Creatures*, i. e. *Angels* represented in that *Vision*, with the *Face of Living Creatures*, standing by the *Wheels*, or Course of Worldly things, to govern their Motions, as *Ezekiel* says, c. 1. 15, 16. 19, 20, 21. and c. 10. 9. 16, 17. Or to the over-ruling influence of invisible Providence, managed by the Ministry of Angels, which has the leading hand, and gives the last and Ruling stroke to all that happens. But only to what is visible before their eyes, or to humane Preparations and Appearances.

And

And expecting more from Providence, than from Worldly Appearances, they never seek to compass any Ends, as I have shew'd, by Unlawful ways, Which will lose them more in the Help of Providence, than it will get in that of Humane Preparations. Nor despair of his Protection, or promised Success, in Gods own ways. Nay their trust in Providence here, they account as one of the best Means, being that which will most ingage Providence. *The Lord will help them, and save them from the wicked, that are always plotting to Destroy them, because they put their trust in him, saith the Psalmist, Ps. 37. 40.* They trust it to the last, when there is nothing visible to back it, nor any thing else to trust to. When, on the burning of Ziklag, the People with David spake of stoning him, and he was Greatly Distressed, then did David encourage himself in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. 30. 1. 6. *Our bones are scattered at the Graves mouth, as Chips are when one Cutteth or Cleaveth wood upon the Earth, says he on another occasion, but mine Eyes are unto thee, O Lord, in thee is my Trust, to keep me from the Snares laid for me, Ps. 141. 7, 8, 9.* When my Soul fainted within me, at what time he was in the Whale's Belly, I Remembered the Lord, saith Jonah, Jon. 2. 7. *We were pressed above measure, and had the Sentence of Death in our selves, says the Apostle, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God who raiseth the Dead, who delivered us, and doth deliver, 2 Cor. 1. 8, 9, 10.* This proves the Sincerity of our Trust in God, when we have no Reserves of Humane grounds. It shews the commendable-

ness,

ness and Degrees thereof, when we Dare throw
ourselves wholly on God's Care and Kindness.
And this is that, whereby Good men Signalise
themselves. They are *Abrahams Children*, by
being Followers of *Abrahams Faith*, Gal. 3. 7.
It is their best Armor and Defence, which they
never put off, even in the hottest Persecutions.
See here, saith St. John, after the seemingly most
helpless States, and hardest Tryals, is the Pa-
tience and Faith of the Saints, Rev. 13. 10. And
we are to be Followers of them; who, thro Faith,
and Patience, inherit the Promises, Heb. 6. 12. yd
But contrary to this, is the way of *Worldly*
Wisdom. When it has little, or no humane Pre-
parations, or *Worldly Appearances*, it is, as
if it had nothing to depend upon; and gives
any things up, even those which God has pro-
mised, and for which he is most concern'd, as
Desperate. What would have become, say
worldly men, of us, or of our holy Religion,
if this and that Unlawful Course had not been
taken? What would have become of them?
had they kept to their Duty, when they went
beyond it, That would have become of Religion,
or of any good thing, which God pleases. And
after all their Breach of Duty to preserve them,
That must still become of them, which God
pleases. So this, in Case of Unlawful Expedi-
ents, can only be the saying of those, who have
no eye at Providence in these matters: or that
Do not rely on God, or put their trust in him,
but in visible Preparations and Appearances.
When they enquire, *what would become?* and ask
about Events, I would ask them again, whether

Q

Events

Events are our Business, or Gods? And if they are under his care, it is only to Distrust God, and to ask him what will become of his Charge, not us what will become of ours? As if he were not able to do his own Business, without the help of our Sins: or to bring to pass, what concerns him in his ways, without our breaking what is commanded, and concerns us, both in his way and ours.

A Fourth and last Rule, which I shall note of Christian Prudence, about the Means; whereby its Ends are to be attained, is, *The Usefulness of Sufferings*, or seeing how it may highly compass the Ends of Christianity, by Persecutions.

This, indeed, is a Paradox to this world, who cannot think of growing richer by their Losses; or that the Sufferings of men can ever be brought into the Account of their Successes and Advantages. But this is a very certain and great Truth in Religion, which serves its Ends by Suffering, as well as by Thriving, and looks upon Persecutions with other Eyes than this World doth.

Spiritual Prudence, that is wise for the Advancement of our Duty, and the Improvement of our Spirits, sees many singular Advantages, which Persecution affords for these. So that it never thinks it self out of its way, but in the high and beaten Road to what it aims at, when it is call'd to Suffer. It is out of the way of worldly Peace and Injoyments; (and those are the things which Persecution takes from us;) but in a very Good way of practising a Number of most acceptable and Honourable Duties, and

and making Spiritual Improvements. For, 1. Persecutions are the best, and truest Proof, of the Sincerity of our Affection to Religion, or of our Love to Christ. It shews plainly, that we set our selves above this World, and are thereby, as he says, *Worthy of him*, when we are ready to Part with any thing of this World, for his sake. And therefore Persecutions are call'd *Trials of our Faith* in the Scriptures. Nay, the fiery Trial, which will separate the Pure Mettals from the Dross, and prove Sound and Right Christians, as it proves pure and Right Mettals, such another way of trying Christs faithful Servants, as he is of trying Silver, or Gold it self. And this, tho'to a worldly mind, as depriving it of worldly Injoyments, it appears a heavy Affliction: to a Christian Spirit, is of Great account. For what so valuable to it, as to prove it self one of Christs faithful Servants, the approbation whereof it sets more by, than by all that is Dear, and desirable to it in this life? What so pleasing to a Soul bent on Heaven, as to have given such a clear Proof of its Preferring Heaven before Earth; of its being so set on things above, as, for their sakes, to Overlook and Despise all beneath; of its having suffered with Christ, which the Apostle gives as a Pledge to all Good Souls, that they shall Reign with him?

2. It calls us to the Exercise of many Duties of Religion; yea, such as are the very height and Perfection thereof, which we have no such opportunity to exercise at a quiet time. For now, when Suffering comes, we are put upon shewing

ing, how far we are set above the World, and how able to Contemn it, being call'd to part therewith: Yea we are much prepared thereby, and disposed so to do, nothing being more effectual to Cure our fondness for this World, than Worldly Sufferings. We are call'd to manifest, how *Heavenly-minded* we are, when our minds have nothing but Heaven to influence and bear them up, and to carry them to quit what is most Dear to them here on Earth. How Resign'd to the Will of God; when that Will of his is so hard to Flesh and Blood: How Patient, when we have Heavy Sufferings to try our Patience. How strong our Faith is of unseen things; when in assurance thereof, we must forego all we see here: or, of Gods Grace, and Present Assistance, when, in Expectation of them, we are going out to Encounter the Greatest Tryals and Difficulties. How we can take up the Cross, and bear it after Christ; when the Cross is laid in our way, and we are call'd out to Suffer for Christ, or for Righteousness sake. And lastly, how under all this, we can heartily thank God, and forgive and Love our Enemies, and Pray for our Persecutors, even whilst they are exasperating our Spirits, by all the Provoking Arts of spiteful and injurious Usage: Not to mention, how, instead of rebating, it is found to add Spirit to good mens pious Resolution, and a steadfastness and Complacency therein. And, indeed, Brave Minds, are not in so much danger of being threaten'd and forced, as Flatter'd and Caress'd out of their integrity; suffering that Shipwreck of a good Conscience,

many

many times, by the Smiles, which they never could be made to do by the Frowns of Prin-

Now, Contempt of the World, and Heavenly mindedness, and Faith, and Patience, and taking up the Cross, and Loving and Forgiving Enemies, and cruel Persecutors, and such Religious Bravery and Gallantry of Spirit in God's Cause, as no menaces and inflictions can shake, much less vanquish, are among the most raised, and elevated Virtues, in all our Religion. And therefore Spiritual Prudence, which rates the beneficialness of Things, as they promote the greatest Virtues, or Carry them on to the Greatest improvements, must needs see, and acknowledge, how Directly and advantagiously it is pursuing its own Ends, tho it be quite out of the way of Worldly Ends, when it is called out to do Honour to God and Religion, and to advance it self, by the exercise of these, and many other noble Virtues, in Persecution.

3. It calls us to do benefit to others by our Sufferings. For our Sufferings for Christ, and in a Christian manner; or with a truly Christian Spirit, in the manifestation of the Virtues before mentioned, will help *their Faith*. It will beget Faith in some, and Confirm it in others, there being a *Witness* or *Testimony in the Blood*, and an Evidence in the Sufferings of Martyrs and Confessors, to make Proselytes, as the Scripture Declares, and they Experienced in the Primitive Church. It will also help *their Practice*. For the sight of such Sufferings in us, will call them with great Power and Force, to Perse-

verance in their Duty, when it comes under Tryals; it will awaken those that are lapsed, and help to stop those that are wavering, and about to fall from it, and Confirm and settle others in what they have received, and embolden them in Professing of it, animating them to a like Suffering for it, as they see we Do. *Many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing Confident, by Example of my Constancy in Bonds, says St. Paul, are thereby become much more Bold, to speak the word without fear, Phil. 1. 14.* It makes one known to another: and in time of Distress, it is a Great heartning and encouragement, to see the Number with us; as well as a Good Confirmation of our Judgment, and Guide of our Practice, to see the same Truths resolutely owned by others, especially by some, whom we have cause to esteem better, and wiser, than our selves. And accordingly, *St. Paul calls us to shew steadfastness at such times, for these Purposes. Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, and not forsake the Assembling of our selves together, says he to the Hebrews, in Persecuting times, Considering one another, to provoke unto Love, and to Good Works, Heb. 10. 23, 24, 25. If we be afflicted, and the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, says he to the Corinthians, it is for your Consolation, and Salvation, which is effectual among you in the enduring of the same Sufferings, which we also suffer, 2 Cor. 1. 5, 6.* This Free and Steadfast Practice of Suffering Duties, and Resolute Suffering for them before others, is the way to call upon and Exhort them to Edifie and Build them up in the like Practice, according to the Rule

Rule of Scripture, which requires us † to Edifie † Rom. 14.
 one another. 19. and
 1 Cor. 14.
 26.

Whereas, on the Contrary, our Denying
 these Duties, or Shrinking from the Sufferings
 threatened in Persecutions, especially in Persons
 of Reputation and Influence, is apt to give mighty
Scandal, or Occasion of Falling. It shocks the
 strong, and turns the Weak out of the way,
 which otherwise they are inclined to walk in;
 and has a mighty effect on most, who are Glad
 of the pretence of having such Examples to Fol-
 low, and of any Colourable Ground to go that
 way. It Encourages those that have Err'd, and
 Pricks others forward, and hardens those that
 are Resolved, weakning the hearts of those
 that Stick to their Duty, and heartning those
 that Revolt from it, and *strengthening the hands*
of the Wicked, and of the Persecutors thereof,
 against which God makes such Complaint,
 Ezek. 13. 22.

So that the way of Christian and Resolute
 Suffering in Persecutions, is a most Charitable,
 and Edifying Course. It doth Honour to Virtue
 and Religion, as I formerly Noted, when they
 are most exploded, and when they are forest prest,
 and have fewest to stand by them. It recalls
 some Deserters, and Establishes other wavering
 Professors, and Animates and Strengthens all its
 Followers, even at that time, when it has the
 most need of them. And all this, though it be
 out of the World, is in the way of Religion,
 it never goes on more prosperously with its
 Ends, then at such times.

4. And being on all these Accounts, the way

to improve and perfect our Virtue: it must answerably be the way to heighten & consummate our Reward. There are Great and Glorious Prerogatives, in the Recompence of *Martyrs* and *Confessors*. St. John

† Rev. 20.
4, 5.

† Notes an extraordinary Preference, and Priviledge of highest value, to those, who were beheaded for the Witness of Jesus, and for the

* Nunc à Præsede Mauritanis, vexatur hoc Nomen, sed gladio tenus, Sicut & à Primordio Mandatum est animadverri in hujusmodi. Tertul. ad Scap. c. 4.

Word of God; (beheading, being the * usual Death of *Martyrs* in those Days, the more Cruel ways of Killing, and exquisiteness of Torture, not being commonly used upon them 'till afterwards:) and

had not Worshipped the Beast, nor his Image, nor had received his Mark upon their hands, or Foreheads, i. e. had stood out courageously under the sorest Tryals, as brave Confessors against all Contrary and Unchristian Practices. Be the Tryals never so Great, for *Christ's*, or for Righteousness sake, I reckon, saith St. Paul, that the Sufferings of this Present time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory, that shall be revealed in us, Rom. 8. 18. The more we endure for, the more we shall receive from him.

† Tert.
ad Scap.
c. 4.

† *Majora Certamina, Majora Sequuntur premia*: The harder the Sufferings, the higher the Recompences, says Tertullian. These Sufferings for Christ, are call'd the Remains, or what is behind of the Sufferings of Christ, Col. 1. 24. and the Marks of the Lord Jesus, Gal. 6. 17. And the more conformable his Servants are, to the likeness of his Sufferings; the more in Proportion, shall they be conformed to the likeness of his Glories. Answerable to our Suffering, shall be our Reigning with

with him, 2 Tim. 12. If so be that we Suffer with him, we shall be also Glorified together, Rom. 8. 17. The Surplusage of their Glory and Bliss, shall be so much the earlier, and Greater than the Bliss of others; as to render these Sufferings, the most valuable Blessings to all truly Good men, and a Cause of highest Joy and Thankfulness. Rejoyce then, and leap for joy; rejoyce, and be exceeding Glad, says our Saviour, for Great is your Reward in Heaven, Luk. 7. 22, 23. Mat. 5. 12. Rejoyce, in as much as ye are made Partakers of Christs Sufferings, says St. Peter, that when his Glory shall be Revealed, ye may partake answerably in that too, and be Glad also with exceeding Joy, 1 Pet. 4. 13.

Such as these are the Benefits, which Virtue and Religion have, by Persecutions. And accordingly, such is the Estimate, which Christian Prudence makes of them. It Dreads them not, as hindrances; but when call'd by God thereto, looks upon them with a willing and chearful eye, as fitting means to set on, and most proper and advantageous to bring about its own Purposes. And the Reasons why, at such times Men are so much against Suffering, is because they look not upon them with Spiritual, but with Carnal Worldly eyes.

I do not seek by this, to make men fond of Sufferings, or put themselves upon them before they need to suffer, without waiting Gods leisure. Such rash and hasty zeal there was, which produced ill Effects in some Confessors of the Primitive Church; and which thereupon it ceased to countenance, and fell Canonically to
censure

confuse and repress, forbidding men to run to suffer before God call'd them, or to give the Judges unnecessary provocation. But when God sends Sufferings, as he doth, when there is no keeping of it off, without acting against the Rules, Interest, or Honour of Religion: I say their Master and mine is not for having us afraid to Suffer; or capable of being forced out of our Principles, or Duty, to avoid it. Nay, he would be glad to see us willing, and chearful under the approach, as well as Constant and Resolute under the pressure thereof: looking on Persecutions, as what will Do no Final hurt, but Do both him, and our selves the most, and best service.

For on this Point I would have it observed, that *Christianity is a Passive Religion, or a Doctrine of the Cross*. It is a Profession to expect, and to bear Sufferings. Its Author was a Crucified Saviour. He was a Man of Sorrows, and a most absolute Pattern of Patience. And the sharp Tryals thereof, though they begun in the Head, were not to end there, but to Descend Down to the Members, whom God, in such measure as he sees fit, *fore-ordains or predestinates to be conformed to the Image of his Son*, viz. in the conformity of Suffering, which is the Argument there treated of, *Rom. 8. 29*. A Share of these, is left for his Church, and Followers; which *St. Paul* calls the *ύπερβολα*, the Remainders or what is behind of the Sufferings of Christ, *Col. 1. 24*. Accordingly he ** Foretels Sorrows* for his Disciples, and calls them to bear, and prepare for them. Passive times are what he signifies

* *Mat. 10.*
17, 18, 21,
22. 34,
35, 36. &
Joh. 16. 33

signifies us; and Passive Duties which we are to Discharge under them, make up a considerable part of his Precepts. *If any man will come after me, says he, he must Deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me, Mat. 16. 24. Through many Tribulations, says his Apostles, we must enter into the Kingdom of God, Act. 14. 22. Yea, all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution, saith St. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 12. So that Sufferings and Persecutions must never seem strange things among Christians.*

Indeed, sometimes through the Goodness and Indulgence of God, we have a long enjoyment of quiet and encouraging times; and so actual Sufferings are Greater Strangers to us. But it never is a Stranger to our Profession and Principles, being one of Religion's chief Businesses. And the best Souls, and most Religious men are gone to Heaven that way, bearing the Cross, before they get the Crown, and suffering for Christ e're they were taken to Reign with him. So went the Ancient Prophets, and Worthies, some stopping the Mouths of Lyons, others quenching the violence of Fire; some having Tryal of Cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea, moreover, of Bonds and Imprisonments; others, wandering about in Sheep Skins and Goat Skins, being Destitute, Afflicted, Tormented; some being stoned, others Sawn asunder, others slain with the Sword; others, Tortured, and not accepting Deliverance, when proffer'd them upon their Apostacy, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, as St. Paul says, *Heb. 11. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.* So went also, not only our Blessed Lord himself; but his Apostles, and the best Souls and Saints of the
Suffering

Suffering Ages; who are set off as much by their Patience, as by any thing else. *I John your Brother and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ,* says St. John to the Seven Churches, Rev. 1. 9. And as they followed Christ, so must we be ready upon occasion to follow them; our Calling being, as St. Paul notes, *to be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience, inherit the Promises,* Heb. 6. 12.

And Professing thus a Passive Religion, we should all have Passive Spirits. The Spirit of Suffering or Patience, is one of our most necessary Qualifications. The Gospel, which we profess, is call'd, as sometimes the word of Faith; So, at others, the word of Patience. *Thou hast kept the word of my Patience,* saith Christ to the Angel of the Church of Philadelphia, Rev. 3. 10. And accordingly, the Professors of this Gospel, must be Signaliz'd, and Remarkably Eminent, as for the Spirit of Faith, so for the Spirit of Patience. *Your Companion,* saith St. John of himself, in the Patience of Jesus, Rev. 1. 9. And we are Followers of those, who got the Promises through Faith and Patience, as St. Paul says. And here, says the Spirit, calling on every one that has an ear to attend, *is the Patience and Faith of the Saints,* Rev. 13. 9, 10. The Scars on his Body, which were the Tryals of his Patience, St. Paul calls the Marks of the Lord Jesus, Gal. 6. 17. And the Miseries and Dangers he every where underwent for him, he terms, *bearing about in his Body the Dying of the Lord Jesus,* 2 Cor. 4. 10. So that Sufferings for Righteousness, are the Livery and

and Badge, which must be wore by his Re-
tainers.

For ingenerating this, I shall briefly note some
Marks of Spiritual Prudence.

1. The First is, *For Christians to be above this
World.* There is no expectation, that any man
should suffer much for *Christ*, 'till this Founda-
tion is first laid. A man tied to this World,
will not give up Worldly Interests for a Good
Conscience: but, will either violently burst
through all the Ties and Remonstrances of Con-
science; or, artificially blind the eyes, and cor-
rupt the sense thereof, and by studied Salvo's,
and nice Distinctions, impose upon himself, 'till
he has brought over his Conscience to his
Worldly Convenience. *Whoever will be a
Friend of the World,* in such Cases as the Scrip-
ture says, must needs be the *Enemy of God*, Jam. 4. 4.
We cannot serve both God and Mammon, saith
our Saviour, Mat. 6. 24. *If we will be his Di-
sciples,* he tells us, we must be ready to *Leave
Houses and Lands, Fathers and Mothers*, Luk. 14.
26. Mar. 10. 29. Till our Hearts sit loose to
them, they are not like in Tryals to stick fast
to him. These seem hard Sayings, but they
should not seem strange among Christians, who
have renounced the World at their Baptism, when
they were first Listed under *Jesus Christ*, and
profess to be Men of another World, not of
this. The Sayings are most reasonable in them-
selves, and easie to such Disposed Hearers, and
fall hard only on Worldly minds, who have a
stronger impression of seen than of unseen things;
and are more influenced by Present Advan-
tages,

tages, than by the hopes of Religion, and Faith of Eternal Happiness.

2. Subserving to this, is another Rule, of *Mortifying, and not Pleasing our Appetites*. Worldly Losses, are like to fall hard on those, who seek to live in Ease and Pleasure, and study Worldly Enjoyments. To accustom and indulge our selves in these, doth mightily corrupt the mind, and ties it Down to worldly things. So that a Voluptuous and Luxurious Age, and a Course of Ease and Fulness is not like to furnish out many Confessors. And therefore Religion, that calls us to Suffer, disposes us thereto by Mortifications, and bringing Down the Body, and Self-Denials, not Self-Pleasings. If we would prepare our selves for Good Souldiers of Jesus Christ, in trying Days, it must be, as St. Paul tells Timothy, *by enduring hardness*, 2 Tim. 2. 3. *that striveth*, as the Apostle says in reference to the Heathen Games, *is temperate in all things*; such Persons always preparing themselves, by a proscribed course of strict Labours and Abstinence, both from Wine and Pleasures. For which purpose, adds he, *I my self keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. 27. And accordingly, this was the Method of the Holy Martyrs, in the days of Persecution, to prepare themselves for Sufferings, not by self-satisfaction, but ~~weeponous action~~ by congruous exercise of stricter abstinence, or by Austerities, and afflicting of the Flesh, as † Eusebius says of young Apphian. This Course of Abstinenes and Self-Denials, will give us Power over our selves, when we cannot have

† De Mart.
Palast,
c. 4. p.
323.

move it over outward things: and then our Satisfaction, do not stand to their Courtesie. We must, not to have what we like, but always to be what we have, and what God is pleased to allot, which is the true Christian Spirit. And he who is of that mind, is both secure against Discontent, and above the Reach and Power of this world.

As a further Help, after we have thus pared off the Pleasures, it will be a serviceable piece of wisdom to this Purpose, by a virtuous Frugality and Providence, to prevent Straits and Necessities of this world. Worldly Losses, can never seize us to more Disadvantage, than when we have before unwarily run our selves into worldly Necessities, which render us, as the more unprovided to bear, so the more loath to fall under them. And therefore it is, as a Great Point of Wisdom at all times, so especially a Preparation for Sufferings, for all Good Christians carefully to live within the compass of their Fortunes. Not to spend upon Hopes and Expectancies, or live upon things before they come to possess them, or to live to the utmost of their Incomes, which will be the ready way to go beyond them, or, by any Extravagance and superfluous Expences, throw themselves into Debts and Worldly Difficulties: which must needs make the voice of worldly Losses, of parting with Lands, or Livelyhoods, more unwelcome, and a Greater Tryal, even to an Honest and well Disposed mind.

These Suffering Spirits thus prepared, are now, God knows, much out of vogue amongst us. Christians were once most Eminent, and Distinguishable

gashable by Passive Virtues, and as a suffering Generation. But now, a Soft and Delicate Spirit is come in place thereof, and the Generality had rather Sin than Suffer, and instead of chearfully taking up the Cross, and bearing it themselves; are for any way that will transfer it, and lay it with Triumph upon their Persecutors; and are all for being known, not as a Suffering, but as a Secular thriving sort of Men. This is a sad case, and lamentable Consequences it produces. For this want of Passive Spirits, and abhorrence of the Cross, is the Root of all the ill, and the true Cause of all the foregoing wicked Devices, and ungodly Rules of the wisdom of the Flesh; and that, which in trying times, makes our Carriage, so unlike that of our Saviour *Christ*, and the Primitive Christians. But as the Power of Christianity revives, this Suffering Spirit will be retrieved among Christians. And they, that profess a *Doctrine of the Cross*, will have *Spirits to bear and take up Crosses*, whensoever they lye in the way of Religion, or a Righteous Cause.

But now most opposite to this, is the *Wisdom of this world*. To be wise for this world, is to be so wise, as to keep it. And not to suffer the Loss of the Good things thereof, so long as any Compliance can avoid losing. The Wisdom of the Flesh, can believe no Good in Fleshly Sufferings, but only in Fleshly Injoyments. And therefore on any occasion, it is ready to give up a Good Conscience, for Carnal Ease; to comply in what is required, tho' very Unrighteous, to save it self; and to break any Duty, even what it holds
fastest,

himself, and has professed highest, rather than, in the Phrase of some at such times is, to be un-
done for it.

C H A P. XI.

Of Spiritual Prudence, chusing Seasons, and tempering to Circumstances.

HAVING hitherto insisted on Christian Prudence, as it lies in seeing and following Right Ends of Religion, and pursuing them, only by fit and Christian ways: I proceed now to shew in the

2. Place another part of this Prudence in the Execution hereof, viz. in taking for these Pur-
suits, the most Advantageous Seasons, in tempering them to Circumstances, and in shewing caution to pre-
vent Harm thereby, or ill Consequences: All these Parts of care about Right Executions, as well as the former about Right Ends and Ways, are like-
wise necessary Requisites of Prudence, which is not only for Doing a Good thing, but for Doing it well and wisely. And Christianity is for Ruling this Part of Prudence by the Laws of Christ, and lays on us sundry Restraints, which, in this matter, are easily and ordinarily broke through, by the worldly wise.

1. First, in the Execution of our Purposes, by the ways aforesaid, Christian Prudence is for taking the most Advantageous Seasons.

To every thing, and to every purpose, as the

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Wise Man says, *there is a Season*, Eccles. 3. 1. And every thing is both most easie to effect, and most Beneficial and Beautiful when it is effected, in its Season. *He hath made every thing Beautiful in its time*, Eccles. 3. 11. And a word fitly spoken, or in its Season, *is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*, says Solomon, Prov. 25. 11. 'Tis the work of Prudence to see these Seasons, or to Discern Opportunities, and take them. A Fool still slips his Opportunities, and sees them not: but a wise man's heart *Discerns both time and judgement*, Eccles. 8. 5. His Eyes, says he again, *are in his head*, to look before him, and round about, or to espy both what to Do, and when, Eccles. 2. 14. And this is one part of that *Circumspection*, or walking *Circumspectly*, which the Scripture calls upon us to use, that we may appear to act, *not as Fools, but as Wise*, Eph. 5. 15. For that *Circumspection*, or looking about us, is, as for the most commodious ways, so for the fittest times and best opportunities, of Performing Actions, or bringing about any Business. And as the Prudence of Worldly Men is shewn in taking their best opportunities, for the things of this Life: So must the Prudence of Christians be shewn in a Commodious Timing, and Watching the most Advantageous Seasons, for what they Do in care of their Souls, and in Service or Honour of Christ Jesus.

But here care must be taken, in determining what are *Good Seasons for Religious Actions*, either Professions of some Points of Faith, or Practice of some Duties. Of this there is the more Danger, because Religion says one thing, and Flesh and Blood another,

in this Matter. So that when Spiritual Prudence, that minds Religion, says one time is a Good Season, for such a Profession or Practice: Worldly Prudence, that minds outward Ease, will often cry, they are most unreasonable. But Christian Prudence must not take its Seasons, from the Serviceableness of any Duty to worldly Purposes, but to its own Ends.

To prevent our setting aside any Duties as out of Season, at the Suggestion of Carnal Wisdom, when, indeed, we have an obliging Call and Season to Discharge them, I shall note these things following.

I. *First*, in Determining the Seasonableness or Unseasonableness, of Professing any necessary Truths of Christ, or Practising any Christian Duties; we must not say, *there is no Season for such Practice or Profession, when there is hazard in them.* This, indeed, is the way of Worldly Wisdom, which thinks Suffering in this World to be Seasonable at no Time, and so accounts persecuted Suffering Duties, to be ever out of Season. To call for the Fruits of Righteousness or Morality, when 'tis Loss of Power, or Place, of Goods, or, it may be, of Life it self, to produce them; it looks upon, as a most unreasonable, and unskilful mis-timing of things. As bad, as to come to the Trees to gather Fruit in the Spring, e're 'tis put forth; or in the Depth of Winter, when both Fruit and Leaves are fallen off long before. The only Season it owns of Doing them, is when it is like to Do it self no worldly hurt thereby: but when they bring

Suffeting, it cries out, This is no time to talk of them.

But this is to Rate the Seasons for Spiritual Duties, not by Ends of Virtue and Religion, or the Advancement and Honour thereof, which are Spiritual Considerations: but only by Present Interest and Security, which are Worldly Motives, and lye ever closest to a Worldly Mind. It is to make the Duties of our Religion, not to be Duties at all times. As if the Truths thereof were not to be professed, or the Laws practised, when we are call'd to Suffer; but only when in Worldly account we are like to get, or, at least, to save by them. But these men never consider, that Christianity, as I observed before, is a *Doctrine of the Cross*, or a Suffering Religion; all the Truths whereof were published, and its Duties prescribed, not for a Thriving, but for a Suffering time. Instead of excepting them, it was Calculated for Days of Persecution: since in such it enter'd and begun, in such it got footing, and daily maintained and enlarged what it had got among men. All its Duties look for their Reward in another world; and so must be duly observed, when they draw after them the Greatest Dangers, or Losses in this world. Persecution, tho' 'tis no Good Season for getting, or keeping any worldly Goods, by Discharge of Duties: yet is as Good as any, nay, better than others, for getting Heaven thereby. Though 'tis no Season, to serve Flesh and Blood; 'tis the properest Season, to serve Truth and Virtue; which are then most especially to be defended by us, when others attack them; and to be own'd by
their

their stedfast Friends, when their Enemies Exclude, and their own Dependants are ready to desert them. And these being the Ends of Spiritual Prudence, instead of esteeming Persecutions, which conduce so much thereto, as unreasonable for Christian Duties, it accounts them, as I have before shewn, the most obliging and Advantageous Seasons.

2. *Secondly,* We must not say there is no Season for Christian Duties, *when there is no worldly Appearance, of Doing Good by Discharging them.* This is usually taken up by Worldly Wisdom, when any necessary Truth, or Virtue, is born down with a Torrent. They say it is in vain, for the Servants and Professors thereof, to practise or appear for it; which would be only to oppose their single selves against an Host, and to endeavor by their own Strength to stem a tide, when the course thereof is most violent, and drives away all before it. This, they think, is only to Destroy themselves, without doing their Duty any Good: which, however it may be pitiable as well intended, yet, say they, is not commendable, as being a Service altogether mis-timed, and most imprudent.

But here men should consider, that their Obligation to profess the necessary Truths, or perform the Laws of God, as they are call'd to them, is not only for their Serviceableness, as an Expedient, but for their own sakes. In Free and Discretionary things, indeed, men are to look to the usefulness, and to go according to the probability of doing Good therewith. But in the necessary Truths, and Laws of Christianity, which

are bounden Duty towards God : there Duty its self is their End, and they have enough to ingage them to any Act, without looking further, if they do their Duty therein. They are not left here to Prudence, or to Do it or let it alone, as they see Cause : but are bound in Conscience to Do the thing, and if thereby they are like to Do no more, yet is the keeping of the Commandment it self, or the Doing of their Duty, a sufficient Purpose.

Besides, when men are Doing their Duty, though there is little Appearance of any effect on others : yet, will it be like to do more Good among them, than they are apt to think, or are aware off. For when they have discharged their Part, by doing of their Duty ; God will manage it as to Events, and make it turn to more use, for the Ends of Religion and his own Glory, than they ever Dreamed of. It is then out of their Hands and Care, and in the hands of Providence ; which will thereby stop some from being ill ; and others that are ill already, from going on without Check and Remorse, and growing worse. Truth and Goodness, though Ordinarily driven out thence by Prejudice, Interest, and vile Affections ; are most Natural and near akin to all our Souls, and so have a secret hank upon us, and a hidden Friend that lurks in all our Bosoms. And this, the Providence and Spirit of God strikes upon, by our Profession or Practice thereof before their Eyes, operating thereby, on some at this time, and on others at that ; on some more, on others less ; according to his own good Pleasure, and their Predispositions.

positions. So working much Good, and many
blessed Effects, that pass betwixt himself and
them, whilst we are insensible of any, and
think of nothing less. Our Free Practice and
Profession, at such times as he requires and calls
for them, but worldly men say we shall do no
Good with them, he uses to Encourage and
strengthen the hands of the Strong, to Establish
the Wavering, to call back the Stray'd Sheep,
and to lift up those that fall, to work Remorse
in its Deserters, and Fear and Faintness in its
Persecutors: to retrieve a Truth, or Duty, when
to Humane Eyes 'tis almost lost; and to beget
anew a Respect and Reverence for it, when it
was all in Disgrace, and seemingly quite Ex-
ploded. The Practice of a Right Good thing,
tho' but by a very few, will quickly draw in
more. † Though only ten among us should appear
for Doing a Duty, says St. Chrysostom, yet would
these ten quickly be made twenty, those twenty fifty,
that fifty an hundred, that hundred a thousand, and
that thousand the whole City. And as by lighting up of
ten Candles, a man may easily fill all the whole
house with Light: So also in Spiritual Good Deeds,
if only ten of us Do our Duty, we shall kindle one
intire flame through the City, yielding Light to
them, and bringing Security to us. For the Nature
of Flame it self, when fallen on combustible matter,
is not so sure to kindle still, and seize the wood
that lies next to it; as the zeal of Virtue fallen
into a few Souls, is, by going on, and still inflaming
more, to fill the whole City.

Thus doth God, when we put it into his Con-
duct, do Great Good, and accomplish great

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Effects,

† Καὶ
ἑκατὶ ἐν
ἡμῖν καὶ ὅσ-
οις ὁ
κύριος, &c.
Chrys.
Orat. 441.
Statuarum.
6. Quod uti-
lis sit Princi-
pum Timor.
Ed. av.
Tom. 6.
p. 509.

Effects, by our discharge of our Duty, when we thought nothing could be hoped from thence. Thus in all times he has done, and daily still doth, and will do in the World: the Experience of all Ages, and the Successfulness of Generous and Brave Asserters, of seemingly destitute and unfriended Virtue, frequently witnessing on that side. And in confidence of this, or however, if that should fail, in Discharge of their own Good Conscience, Good men in all times have been careful still to Confess the Truths of God, and Do their own Duty, when there were the fewest that seemed capable of being thereby wrought upon, and they had none to stand by them; but strove altogether against the stream, having the whole World to oppose them. As, *Noah wrought Righteousness, Elias was zealous for the true God, Jeremy was an asserter of his Mind and Precepts, and many other Holy Men and Prophets, yea, our Blessed Lord and his Apostles, were the undaunted Preachers and Practisers of Decryed Godliness, in the most Degenerate, Deriding, and Persecuting Ages, when they seem'd to have the fewest prepared Hearers or Spectators, all many times appearing ready to contradict, and few, or sometimes none, to stand by and back them, as I formerly noted.*

3. *Thirdly, We must not say Christian Duties are unseasonable, when they Do not suit with some Designs carrying on, or are against some Seeming and much Desired Good, of Church or State. This is the way of Worldly Wisdom, which, when any Truths or Duties hinder some*
worldly

worldly Good they are pursuing, for Religion, or the Kingdom; bids the Professors thereof, to stop their Practice and Professions of them, for some fitter time. If these are Truths and Duties, say they at such times, let them give way to Publick Good, and the Advancement of true Religion, which are of more importance. And let those that believe them, take care, whilst they embrace these, to approve themselves with all, as Good Members of the Publick, whereof they all receive the benefit, by seeking and setting on, not retarding or obstructing the Good of Church, or Common-Wealth. You may shew your care of them, will they suggest, when it will be as a Good, so a Wise and Prudent care, and hinder no Greater thing. But never bring them in play now, to stop the Great, and much and Generally wish'd for Good, that is going on. For this is a Critical time for it, and if this opportunity is over-pass'd, the like may never return again.

But are not we all Disciples of *Christ*, and Professors of Religion, as well as Members of a settled Church, and Kingdom? And must we not first take care, to acquit our selves as Good Christians; before we seek how to shew our selves Good Statesmen, and Politicians? Is it not our Profession, to be more for another World, than for this? And may such Professors go out of the way of being happy there; when that serves to make themselves more happy here? A Good Christian must never be wanting to his own Duty, or go beyond it, to Do Good to any, nay, to a whole Nation. And so must never think

think of setting aside the Season for Discharging his Duty, for a Season of serving of the Church or Nation. He must never slip the Season of shewing himself Good; for a Season of making himself or others Secularly Fortunate: or the Season of Practising and Professing as the Servant of Christ; for the Season of serving any Interest or Condition, though never so Great and Publick in this World. There is *no Doing Evil that Good may come*; Good publick, or Good private, as I have shewed before.

Besides, 'tis not for a Good man to think of Doing Good to a Church or Nation, by Evil-Doing. The Greatest Good to them in his Opinion, is to engage God for them. And that must be, by keeping his Commandments, and practising and professing them, as we have opportunity. But never breaking them, or setting them aside, to make use of some Worldly opportunity. If we would Do Good to Church or State, to Do this wisely, we must Do it under God, not by setting up against him. So we must not throw out his Service, as an unreasonable thing; when an opportunity is offer'd us to serve the Publick, by refusing to serve him when he calls. The Thoughts of Doing Good, *i. e.* Temporal Good, or that of outward Settlement to the Publick: if by Breach of Duty, or omission thereof when call'd by him to Discharge it, is a Temptation. And the Doing it that way, is endeavouring to be wise against God, and setting up Policy against Religion; which, if God must give Success, is not like to speed,

or

or in the Event to procure Good to them.

Near a kin to this, is *thinking it no Season, to Condemn and Fault things, as we did whilst they served others, when they come to serve our selves.* This is the way of this World, if not to commend, yet to connive at any Error or Wickedness, whilst it gets by it. It is pleased, if not with the Wickedness, yet with the Advantage; and had rather bear the Sin for the Profit, than want and Condemn the Profit for the Sins sake. So it will not open its mouth against Errors, whilst 'tis getting; or against Sins, and breach of Duty, whilst 'tis served by them: being not so much offended with their falseness, or wickedness; as pleased with their usefulness, or convenience. Though most loud at others, it is silent then; and would have others too to be silent, and not cry out against them at such times. And this is meer Wisdom of this World, or being Wise for Worldly Things; which lies in getting, or taking worldly Advantages, however they come by them, and can brook what Religion most abhors, whilst it brings in what Flesh and Blood best approves. Which plainly shews, that a man has not so much of Religion, as of this World, and Self-Design; nor is acted so much by Conscience, as Convenience.

Thus must we be Careful, that the Pretence of unseasonableness, do not carry us to smother our Belief of any Truth, or our Practice of any Duty, when God calls us to shew them forth; on any Pretence of *hazard to our selves, of unprofitableness to Religion, or our Neighbours, or of their being*

being a hindrance to any Good, that doth come in to our selves, or is sought to be brought about for the Church or State.

The Truth is, in Points of direct and expresse Duty, the part of Prudence lies more *in sight and Discerning, than in Choice of Seasons.* In Matters that are not of Direct and Determinate obligation, there is more Room for Discretion in the timing of them, and in Resolving both whether and when to Do them. For Free things, which are not Determined by the Law of God; or, that are not directly enjoyn'd, but may indirectly, some more, and some less, be serviceable to, and promotive of that which is; or that are free, and undetermined expressions and instances of General Laws: Such Free Things, I say, and Free-will Offerings, are most properly matter of Prudence, being left to Prudence, and not determinately bound on Conscience. And in these, there is a proper Choice of Seasons, which men may embrace or let slip, either Doing that thing or another, now or at another time, as they see cause.

But in things expressly required by God, and Points of Direct Duty, there is not the like Choice of Seasons, or Room for Discretion. For, whensoever God calls us to them, and they are put upon us, either by the Authority of Superiors, or by any occasion with our Neighbours, or other just Call of Providence, giving us opportunity for them; or, perhaps, laying us under a necessity, either of Professing or Dissembling them, or Practising them, or what is Repugnant to them: We are then under a necessity

cellity and Obligation of Discharging, and have no Liberty to let them alone. For Matters of express Duty, we are bound to perform, as oft as God calls us to perform them. Whensoever he calls, we have no power to refuse. And this Call is by his Providence, as that brings us under opportunities, and puts us upon Practising, or Declaring our selves. And, what time Providence shall allot and fix on for these, is at God's Choice, not at ours. He is Free, when he sees best, to give the Calls: but when once he doth, we are under his Command, and never free to let them aside, or refuse obedience. So our Part, is only a Duty and Necessity, to see and embrace the Seasons he chuses: and God's part is, to have the Liberty and Discretionary Power to chuse them. And therefore the Wisdom and Prudence to be shewn in Choice of these Seasons, is God's Wisdom, and not ours. His Providence takes care of that; and 'tis a wise Providence, that never calls us to the Profession of necessary Truths, or Practice of necessary Duties, but at wise and fitting Seasons, which best fit his Purposes, though they least fit ours. So that whensoever he Calls us to them, we are eased of that care, of Deliberating about the seasonableness of them. In Free things, we are left to Chuse the Seasons our selves, and may let go a worse, in hopes of a better. But in necessary and bounden Duties, God's Call must always be our Season, and we are only to discern and take it, not left to Chuse and Deliberate upon it, God having already made that Choice to our Hands.

2. Secondly,

2. Secondly, In Execution of our Purposes, Christian Prudence is for *Tempering what we Do to Circumstances*, i. e. For considering Place, and Persons, and Instruments, and manner of acting, and the like, and so to suit all, as may best serve our Design, and set off the thing Done, so as may give us most Help and Advantage from all, and least Hurt or Hindrance from any of them. This attention to Circumstances, is that *Circumspection* which is so much spoken of, and is implied in Prudence: which St. Paul calls for, when he exhorts the *Ephesians* to walk not as Fools, but as Wise, as I noted before, Eph. 5. 15. *Walk in wisdom*, says he again to the *Colossians*, towards them that are without; calling them to such Prudence in their Carriage towards, and before such as consider'd the Principles and Dispositions of those they conversed with, Col. 4. 5. *Let your speech*, says he in that place, *be with Grace, and seasoned with Salt*, i. e. Savoury and Prudent, and so seasoned and temper'd on every occasion, as it most fit; that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, or to give each such an Answer as may be proper for him, and the occasion, v. 6. This tempering what we Do to Circumstances, and Distinguishing of Persons and Places, and the like; is a Great point of Prudence. And Christians in their way, must take care, as they are able, to adorn themselves therewith, as well as others. Endeavouring, when they Do their Duty, to Temper themselves so towards all, Neglecting or Despising none, that the Good they Do may be best received, and win most upon the minds of men, and give the least offence

effluence to them. And when they Do any things more Free and Discretionary, for the Honour or Interest of Virtue or Religion, or for any other Good Design: that they so moderate and order the things they press, as will be best bore by Persons and Places, as may get them most or best Friends, or fewest and faintest Opposers; as may afford most ease and success to them in compassing their Designs, and most Fruit and Effect both to themselves, and the Good Designs they carried on, when they have compassed them.

There is Place for this wise tempering themselves to Circumstances, not only in these Free things, which are matters of Prudence; but also in Doing their bounden Duty, which is matter of Conscience. Not so tempering themselves to Places or Persons; Ends, or Instruments, as to let their Duty alone, when the meer Doing thereof will Distemper and Disturb them. But tempering themselves in all that is extrinsecal about it, and in the manner of Doing it; that bating what the Duty it self Doth, which ought to be Done, nothing annexed to it, or in the manner of Doing it, shall give them any unnecessary Provocation. It need not be Done, for instance, with bitterness, and fierceness of Spirit, when a milder way, and being more Gently and Compassionably offer'd, would be like to be more easily welcomed, and take more effect. It need not come with accusations, and invectives against others, when it would be more heeded; and operate higher, in the way of opening our own Consciences. It need not come tacked to any other things which are more Displeasing; when it may enter

enter better by it self alone. In these, and the like matters, not our Duty, which we cannot mince or alter, but our selves, and our manner of expressing it, which we may alter to Circumstances; is much for the Advantage, both of it, and of our selves. And is no more but that Caution which *Christ* call'd his Disciples to, when, in their Free Profession of Persecuted Duties, he bid them withal *beware of Men*. And when they were sent forth, as *Sheep among Wolves*; though they should undauntedly Deliver the Message they were Charged with, yet to be as *harmless as Doves*; which, besides what their Duty it self did, would give those Wolves no unnecessary provocations, *Mat. 10. 16, 17.*

But if Worldly Wisdom comes to temper the doing of our Duty to places and persons; it will so temper it, as at any time to give it up, for our external Quiet. It will take so much as will go down, and throw aside the Rest: and answer all by saying, the Times or Affairs, the Places or Persons would not bear it. To prevent such tempering of Duty to Circumstances therefore, for our own Quiet, as would be an impairing, or Breach of Duty; I shall give these following Cautions in this Point.

1. This tempering of our selves to Circumstances, in the doing of our Duty, is never by omitting any Duty, as I said, when God Calls for it; but only by tempering our own manner of Performance, so as best suits the present Circumstance, and may give the least offence. The Christians, for instance, would temper their Devotions to the Circumstances of persecuted men

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in the first Ages : by not letting those Devotions fall, but by Praying, and Communicating in the Night, in the Desert, in Close Meetings, when they could not with safety do it openly and in publick, for fear of the Jews and Heathens. They temper'd themselves at Jerusalem to a time of Distress and Confiscations, for the Profession of Christianity ; not by Concealing, or Denying their Sect and Profession ; but by * Selling their Lands and Houses, * *Act. 4. 34, 35. &c.* and putting it into a common Stock : that so, when their own Estates were seized on for owning the Christian Name, the Church might have wherewithal to relieve them. St. Paul, and the other Apostles, were sent out to Preach the Gospel, to a prepossessed, incensed, and spiteful World, as so many Sheep in the midst of Wolves, as our Lord says. And they temper'd themselves to these men, and times ; not by letting fall their Preaching, or keeping back any part of the Counsel of God ; not that of the Cross of Christ, which gave the most offence, being † to the Jews a Stumbling Block, and to the Gentiles Foolishness ; nor any just Reproof of Idolatry and Superstition, so irksom to the Heathen ; nor any of the elevated Duties of Morality and Godliness, which were so very disgusting to the Lusts of men, or the like. But by Delivering these things in fairness and tenderness, without giving any more offence, than would unavoidably be taken at the things themselves : Becoming all things to all men, as St. Paul says, that they might by all means gain some, *1 Cor. 9. 22.*

† *1 Cor. 1. 23.*

The Exercise of Discipline, indeed, was more a matter of Prudence and Discretion. And

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therefore

therefore in Rules thereof, they would temper to the State of the Church, sometimes pressing, and sometimes suspending, now executing, and then omitting them, as the place and time would bear, and as might best suit the Circumstances of those they had to do with. But in matters of Duty, which are not at the liberty of Discretion, but under Necessary Obligation; they never temper'd that to any Persons, Place, or other Circumstances, by omitting it. They never smother'd it, when call'd to profess it; nor omitted it, or did the contrary, when call'd to the performance thereof. Their Prudence in tempering themselves to Circumstances in Points of Duty, was by tempering themselves thereto, whilst they did their Duty, never whilst they let it alone, or acted contrary. Theirs was a Godly Prudence, or a Wisdom twisted evermore with Virtue and Circumspection, never separate from innocence. When they put on the *Subtlety* and *Circumspection of Serpents*; they put on withal, according to our Saviour's Order, *the innocence of Doves*; or look'd about them, to take care for their Duty, before they look'd about to take care for themselves.

Not as the worldly-wise, who will temper away their Duty, to Compound for their outward Peace and Enjoyments. Though it be at other times, it is not to be done, say they, in our Circumstances. That is, if it is like to lose our Friends, or give opportunity to our Enemies to pull us down, and set up themselves; if it suits not with the minds of Men, or the state of Affairs; with the seeming Safety of Mens Persons,

of

of Religion, Laws, or Liberties. Such Circumstances, it makes a Ground to set aside Duties, not only to temper us in the Discharge thereof. Instead of tempering the full Discharge of Duty with Prudence, it thinks it Prudence then to throw it quite off, and allow it no Observance, or Discharge at all.

2. This Tempering to Circumstances, must not be by *abating of Moral Duties, to Compliance with Worldly Necessities and Convenience.* This is the way of the Worldly-wise, where they do not throw off all, to pare away part of the Obligation; and to perform no more, than in their present Circumstances may be tolerably suitable, and the Flesh will consent to.

They will urge the Circumstance of the *Person*. Another man, say they, might Discharge the Duty more fully in this Case. But as for me, Men must consider my Relation, how I am joyn'd in Affinity or Blood; my Obligations, how Great Favours I have received; or the Necessity of my Condition, and my Dependance for Support or Interest, on those who are warm and zealous for another way. So that it is not to be expected from me, that I should keep so fully and invariably to the Duty, as another Person of more easie and agreeing Relations, Obligations and Dependance may do.

And the Circumstance of the *Place*. Were I in a Place, says a mind that retains too much of this World, where this or that Duty would go down, where the due Discharge of it would be like to be quietly received, or where the Minds of men were any ways impressible, to give some

appearance of its doing good upon them, much more Fidelity might be shewn therein. But I live where the Spirits of Men are in a Ferment, where the Duty is Generally Decryed, or bitterly Persecuted, and the Practice thereof, instead of procuring any Religious Regard from the Beholders, provokes only their outrage against the Practisers thereof. So I am forced to Sail as near the Wind as I can, that I may not endeavour both against Wind and Stream. I omit what will not be endured, and practise what will, and this meerly to content the People, as forced on by the press of a Crowd, one Man being unable to withstand a whole Multitude.

And the Circumstance of the *Instruments* or *Auxiliaries*. Though they would discharge the Duty fully, were they left to themselves; yet, now they are upon Designs, and must consider, not only what will pass with themselves, but with their Complices. They must keep in with their Humane Succors, and therefore they must abate of their Religious Duties, lest standing too stiffly and inflexibly for them, they disoblige and lose their Patrons, or Auxiliaries. It is well, say they, if by a Man so linked in, some part can be performed, whilst some part is abated. Some part must be yielded, to gratifie their Interests, or their Principles; some to keep those of wrong, and some to keep the loose and immoral, or those of no Religion.

And the Circumstance of the *End*. They would, as please God in the Duty, so profit his Church thereby. And a Duty happens at some time, not to suit the interest of their Party in Religion.

gion. If they will abate, or infringe it; they may set up, or keep up themselves: but if still they will faithfully discharge it as they ought; in all appearance they must become subject, and truckle under others. To deduct something in the present Circumstance, is most safe, or serviceable, for that Party of Christians they espouse, which they call God's Church. And in this strait, they think they should not be censured, if they practise so much as is serviceable, and lay the rest aside.

And the Circumstance of the *Time* admitting no season for the full practice of any Duties, or profession of any Truths, when there is hazard in them, or no probability of doing Good by them, or they are like to be impeditive of some designed Good, or much desired Settlement, to Church or State, of which I spoke before.

Thus is Worldly Wisdom for making bold with its Duty, to save its Worldly Concerns; and for tempering Duty to the present Circumstances, by abating it, and by parting with so much thereof when it retains the rest, as, all its Circumstances consider'd, shall make it draw least inconvenience after it from any of them. Which is nothing else, but setting up this World, above Almighty God, and our own Convenience, above his ways. Whereby, however we may promise our selves to pass for Worldly Wise; we shall be sure to appear ill Christians, as I think is clear enough from the foregoing Chapters.

I speak not this, of abating in Discharge of our Duty thus to Circumstances, *where Circum-*

stances really make Abatements. I know there is not so much due from us in some Circumstances, as there is in others. For some Circumstances are incapacities; and these abate, so far, and so long, as they incapacitate. *Impossibileum*, says the Moral Rule, *nulla est obligatio*, *No Man is tied to impossibilities.* And therefore, where we owe never so much Duty, we are not bound to an actual exercise and discharge thereof, whilst we are not in capacity. So far, as it is Providentially out of our Power, and so long as it is so, our actual Discharge thereof is under a Suspension: 'till by Degrees it come to be in our power again, which always brings back with it a like gradual Return of our Obligation. But I speak of their tempering their Duty in these Abatements, to Circumstances of Worldly Convenience, where there is the same State and Foundation of their Religious Obligations, as at other times. We must not abate our Duties, whose Ground and Obligation is still the same, and which we have Power and Opportunity to Practise, if we dare run Hazards, and sustain Inconveniences and Losses for them; to temper them to the external Ease and Convenience of Place, or Persons, or other present Circumstances. Which, in this tempering, is not to respect the Obligation of Circumstances, but only the Fleishly Ease, Convenience, and Advantage of them.

3. This Tempering to Circumstances, *must lie only in our not unnecessarily provoking Men, whilst we do no ill our selves: not in our carrying on the unreasonable or ungodly wills of others.* It is one

one thing to temper our selves to the Necessities of things; another, to the Lusts or Vices of Persons; one thing to suit their innocent wants, or ways; another to set on their wickedness. This is *† to have Fellowship with the works of Darknes*, to ** partake of other Mens Sins*, and Sin along with them for Company. So that we must never talk of tempering our selves to Circumstances, by putting our selves into other mens ill circumstance, or by complying in any ungodly or ill things. If ill things then are driven on, by the violence and press of People, or the Power of Rulers: if all seem to Conspire together, and Combine to oppress an innocent Person, or to explode an Excellent and Good thing, to pull down what is Right, and set up what is Wrong, to seek safety by what is Sinful, or Publick Good, either of Church or State, by Doing Evil: it must not be thought any part of our Prudence to temper our selves to their Ungodly Wills by Compliance, by striking in and countenancing, by being, or seeming to be for them, by crying up, or carrying on, or going along therewith. If we would seek to be truly Good, rather than falsely to appear Wise; Religion is not for such ebbs and flows, for being fast and loose with virtuous or vicious things, as the motion of the Mobile, or Course and Humor of the Time is. It is firm and staunch, and always true to God, and to it self; not to be used or laid aside as men please, and made to bend in all the turns and flexures of their Humors, or Vices.

*† Eph. 5. 11
* Eph. 5. 7.
1 Tim. 5. 22
2 Joh. 11.*

C H A P XII.

*Of Caution in preventing harm by any Duties.
And of Flight in Persecutions.*

3. **T** *Hirdly* and lastly, in execution of our Purposes, *Spiritual Prudence* is for shewing Caution, to prevent Harm thereby, or ill Consequences.

This is a Great Part of Prudence, to shew Providence, or foresee things before they are come to pass, and, as far as depends on us, to prepare against, or put by the ill, and make the most of the Good that is in them. *A Prudent man foreseeth the Evil, says Solomon, and hideth himself, or withdraws from it: but the Simple, without fore-sight, pass on to meet it, and are punish'd, Prov. 22. 3.* It consists much in Caution and Wariness, looking about how it may best escape or remove Impediments, and avoid hurtful and ill Consequences, which is the great proof of Prudence among men: the Wise aiming at it, and the Generality estimating the Prudence of any Counsel or Management, by the absence of ill Events, and the Prosperity or Successfulness thereof.

Now this Caution our Lord calls for also from his Servants, as what must shew them to be religiously Prudent, or Spiritually Wise. *Beware of Men,* said he to his Disciples, when he sent them out to discharge their Duty in the midst of Dangers, or as *Sheep in the midst of Wolves,*

Wolves, and bid them, for their Guard against them, to put on the *Serpent's Prudence*, as well as the *Dove's Innocence*, Mat. 10. 16, 17. And their *Circumspection*, whereby St. Paul Exhorts the *Ephesians* to approve themselves, *not as Fools*, but *as Wise*. He sets off by this Caution or Wariness, in preventing whilst they could, without being False to their Duty, such Harm and ill Consequences to themselves. *Redeeming the time*, says he, i.e. says † *Tertullian*, *Gaining your selves a safe Conduct, or free Passage, by the wisdom of your Conversation*. Or, securing your selves whilst you may, and gaining as much Respite as you can; which is call'd in * *Daniel* *gaining*, or, as the *Margin* from the *Chaldee*, and as *Junius* and *Tremellius* render it, *buying or redeeming the time; because the Days are Evil*. So that without such Caution, you cannot enjoy, or hold the time long, Eph. 5. 15, 16. And on the contrary, the improvident man in the Gospel, for his having no Prospect of Casualties, or Preparation for them, is call'd the † *imprudent* or *unwise Man*. *Thou Fool*, says God to him, *this Night shall thy Soul be taken from thee*, Luc. 12. 20.

† *Sapientia conversationis lucrari nos vult com- meatum.*
Tert. de Fuga in Persec. c. 9. p. ap. 540.
* Dan. 2. 8.

† *ἀφρον.*

Two ways I shall note of shewing this Caution, to prevent Harm to our selves, by Suffering, or Persecuted Duties.

1. *First, Without a Call, not to put our selves upon what brings Danger*. We must not throw our selves upon Temptations, since we are taught to Pray Daily, that God would not lead us into them. To go rashly, and put our selves upon them, especially in a Great Tryal, looks like tempting God,

*Ap. Euseb.
Hist Eccl.
l. 4. c. 15.

God, and presuming too much upon our own strength, wherein they who are most confident, are oft-times most shamefully worsted; as *Peter*, *that was confident he should own Christ beyond all the Disciples*, was the man, who of all others did most shamefully Desert and Deny him, *Mat. 26. 33. 74.* And as *Quintus the Phrygian*, who, as the Church of *Smyrna* * note, *rashly offering himself with some others, and standing forth uncalled before the Tribunal, fell or Denied Christ in the Tryal.* Giving, say they, an illustrious Document to all, not rashly and unnecessarily to throw themselves upon Dangers, without any just regard to their own weakness and infirmities. 'Tis not for us to run into *Sufferings for Righteousness*, before we are sent; but patiently to wait God's time. For as our Suffering is only in Obedience and Conscience towards God, so should we stay for it 'till it pleases God, and 'till his Providence calls us thereto. *Whom he called, saith St. Paul*, speaking of our *Sufferings for Righteousness in conformity to Christ*, *them he also justified, or made victorious in them, Rom. 8. 29, 30.* And *hereunto are ye called, saith St. Peter*, treating of *acceptable Suffering for well-Doing, 1 Pet. 2. 19, 20, 21.* So that in Suffering for God, the most acceptable discharge of Duty, and surest hope of Victory, is when we are call'd to it. We must not run at any time, or chuse our own time, but allow God, in Course of Providence, to Summon us out, and to appoint us the Season, as of Acting, so of Suffering for him. And *this Season*, in Scripture is call'd *our hour*, which Christ himself would not Preoccupate, not exposing, but with-
drawing

drawing himself, before his hour was come, Joh. 7. 1. and 11. 54. but when once it was come, readily offering and resigning himself to bear what was appointed for him, Joh. 17. 1. and c. 18. 4, 5.

Some, indeed, among the Primitive Christians, out of an immoderate zeal of Martyrdom, were hasty to fetch down Sufferings, where they came not fast enough of themselves. They stepped out to do a persecuted Duty, when they were not put upon it, nor had any Call of God there-to; and would not stay to expect their Enemies Rage; but rashly run out to Challenge and Provoke it. This forwardness, after they had seen some sad Miscarriages and shameful Effects thereby, was Discountenanced, and Restrained by the Primitive Church. St. Cyprian's last Charge to his Flock, a little before his Martyrdom, being

† that none of them should voluntarily offer themselves to their Heathen Persecutors, because, what our Lord is for having us to Do, is to Confess when we are asked, not to Profess un-

† Ne quisquam ultro se Gentilibus offerat, nos confiteri magis voluit, quam Profiteri, Cyp. Ep. 81.

asked. And the Church of Smyrna, Condemning it in † their Epistle; and the Council of Eliberis Decreeing in the 60 Canon, that, if in their zeal against Idolatry, and haste of Martyrdom, any shall break the Heathen Idols, and be slain for their Pains, there being no direction for this in the Gospels, nor any such thing ever done by the Apostles, they shall not be received into the Number of Mar-

† Ap. Vales. Annot. in Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

tyrs. † St. Chrysostom's Advice contains, I think, the true Method of Christian Prudence, in this case. Let us pray to God, says he, that we enter not into Temptation: but being brought thereinto, let

† εὐχαρι-
μεθαί μὲν
ἐν τῷ θεῷ
μὴ εἰσελ-
θεῖν, &c.
Chrysost.

us Homil. 42.

Quod non
oportet
contur-
bati cum
videamus
bonos in
adversis,
Eccl. Tom. 7.
Ed. Sav.
p. 908.

us generously undergo it. For that is the Part of Temperate men not, to cast themselves upon Dangers; this, of Brave Spirits and Philosophers. Let us therefore, neither throw our selves upon them rashly and simply, which only shews Boldness: nor Draw back when Driven into them, or when call'd out by the Nature and Circumstances of things, for that is Timorousness. When we are called to Preach a Persecuted Truth, let us not Refuse: but when there is no call, from any Cause at all, or Profit, or Necessity according to Godliness; let us not run of our selves, for that is Ostentation, and Superfluous Boasting. — As a Generous Souldier, be continually in Arms, be Prudent, be Vigilant, and always expect the Enemy: but go not to create thy self Enemies; for that is not the Part of a Souldier, but of one that is Seditious. But if the Trumpet of Religion calls, go out forthwith, and set lightly even by Life it self, and with Great Promptitude Descend to the Conflict, &c. These things I say, out of a desire to have you keep the Laws of Christ, who commands us to pray that we be not led into Temptation, and commands us too, to take up our Cross and follow him: for these two are not contrary one to another, but very well agree together.

On this Point I shall further add, when, with the Freedom of Confessors, we speak for Persecuted Truths, or Laws with others, that another allowance of Christian Prudence is, not to profess this promiscuously to all Persons; nor, after we have sufficiently Declared our selves, by importunities of unprofitable Discourse, still to incite an unpersuadable, and virulent Disputer's Rage against us.

Some

Some men, are not impressible by Reason, or by any Rules of Sober Virtue and Goodness; but possess'd by Profaneness, or utterly overrun with Madness and Rage of Faction. They are ready to afford, I say not only a Deaf Ear, but a Scurrilous and Prophane Tongue, a Treacherous Snare, or a Spiteful Hand, to any offers or arguments on Persecuted Duties, that shall be made to them.

Now to lay such Truths, or Laws of God, before these men; is not to promote, but to prostitute them. And therefore here the Rule of our Lord takes Place, *not to cast Pearls before Swine*, i. e. the Precious Truths of God, before those Stupid Sinners, that have no Sense of them; but, instead of Reverently taking of them up, will rudely bespatter, and trample them under Foot. Nor to throw holy things before Dogs, i. e. before those, who, instead of worthily entertaining, will spitefully snarl and bark against them, and be ready to Tear and Rent those, that hand them to them, *Mat. 7. 6.* And thus the Holy Confessors, though ready to give an Answer, as † St. Peter required, to any one that asked a Reason of the hope that was in them: yet did not hold themselves obliged to give this account to one that asked, only that he might Scoff, or Blaspheme, or Treacherously Betray or Trepan; but to such as asked Soberly, or with a Desire of Learning. Giving, either no Answer to others: as Christ would not to Herod, who only for his Curiosity and Pastime, question'd with him, *Luke, 23. 8, 9.* Nor to the High Priest, who when they had not matter enough from his Accusers, urged

† 1Pet. 3.
15.

urged him to speak to what they had said against him; not for Information, they being resolv'd, † Luk. 22. as Christ † told them, not to believe him, nor to let 67, 68. him go, but that he might lay hold of something more sufficient to condemn him, from himself. Mat. 26. 60, 62, 63. Or else, Giving like Answer, as * Potinus of Lyons did to the President, *εἰ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὧσόν, ἰὼν εἴ τι σέθεν, εἴ τίς σε γινώσκων, ὅταν ἐπὶ σοὶ ῥηθῇ, ὅτι θεὸς εἶμι.* if thou art worthy, thou shalt know, when he scoffingly and abusively asked, who is the God of the Christians.

2. Secondly, When, on Gods Call, we have done our Duty, and are thereby brought into Dangers, it allows us to save our Persons, whilst we innocently may, by Concealment, or Escape, and Flight in Persecutions. When they Persecute you in one City, flee to another, Flight and Concealment in extream Perils, being what Christ himself allows, Mat. 10 23.

† Can. 9. This has been the way in all times, as Petrus
 10. Alexandrinus, that Blessed Martyr, Discourses,
 * Concil. in his † Canonical Epistle, taken * afterwards
 Trull. into the Code of the Universal Church; and as
 Cap. 2. † St. Athanasius, after him, has Demonstrated
 † Apol. 1. more fully, viz. for Good Men, in Cruel Per-
 de Fuga secutions, by Flight, or Concealment, to save
 sua p. 707. themselves, till some necessary Discharge of
 Tom. 1. op. Duty, or Course of Providence, Deliver'd them
 * Gen. 27. up for Suffering into their Persecutors Hands.
 43. Thus as Athanasius observes, † Jacob Fled from
 † Exod. 2. Esau. And * Moses, on Slaying the Egyptian, into
 15. the Land of Midian from Pharaoh. And † David
 * 1 Sam. 19. from Saul, when he sent to slay him. Thus also
 2. 10. 12. Elijah absconded, and † hid himself for Fear of
 † 1 King. 17. 3. and Ahab; and fled for his Life from Jezabel. And
 c. 19. 3. 4. the

the Sons of the Prophets, in Jezebel's Persecution, were † hid, and fed by Fifties in a Cave, by Good Gadiah. * And thus the Disciples likewise assembled in Private, or held Night-Meetings, and shut the Doors for fear of the Jews. And Paul, at Damascus, was † let down by the wall in a Basket by Night, to escape those that watched the Gates Day and Night to kill him. Yea, our Blessed Lord himself, who granted this Liberty to his Disciples, when Persecuted in one City, of fleeing to another, upon occasion made use thereof. When the Jews at Jerusalem sought to take him, he escaped out of their hands, and went away again beyond Jordan, and there abode, that being a more quiet and secure Place, Joh. 10. 39, 40. And another time, when he was not safe in Judea, he walked in Galilee, and would not walk in Jery, because the Jews sought to kill him, Joh. 7. 1. And again, when, on the raising of Lazarus, the Jews took counsel together to put him to Death, he walked no more openly among them, but went thence into a Countrey near to the Wilderness, and there continued with his Disciples, Joh. 11. 53, 54.

The Reason of his Flying, as Athanasius * notes, was because his hour was not yet come. And this is given as the Reason, why, when they sought to take him, they could not do it, and no man laid hands on him, † because his hour was not yet come, Joh. 7. 30. Till then, he took the Liberty which he has allowed us, and prudently absconded, when sought after to his hurt, and made his escape as we are wont to Do. But that hour being once come, as he declared it was, Joh. 17. 1. instead of absconding any more,

he

† 1 King.
18. 4.

* Joh. 20.
19. Acts
12. 12.

† Act. 9.
24, 25.

* Ib. p. 709.

† Jo. 8. 20.

he went out to them, saying *whom seek ye?* and telling them, *I am he*, Joh. 18. 4, 5. He neither suffer'd himself, as *Athanasius* * observes, to be taken before his time, nor endeavour'd to hide himself from them, when once his time was come.

* Ib. p.
711.

† Ib. p.
710.

For each man, as that † *Eusebius* says, there is a prefix'd time. As there is for Spring and Autumn, Summer, and Winter; so there is a stated and appointed time for Life and Death. And to this the Scriptures refer, when they speak of taking men away in the midst of their Days, Ps. 102. 24. of Dying before their time, Eccl. 7. 17. And of coming to the Grave in a full Age, as a shock of Corn comes in in its Season, Job 5. 26.

† Ib. p.

Now, what time was appointed for him, † saith he, our Saviour Christ knew: and accordingly, though he withdrew at all times before; at that time he offer'd himself to the Officers sent to take him. But as for our time, as he adds, we know not what time God has appointed us, till it appears by the Order of Events, and the Course of Providence. Behold I am Old, and know not the Day of my Death, said the Patriarch Isaac, Gen. 27. 2. And therefore the way of God's Saints, when Men laid wait for them, was not, as he* goes on, to obtrude themselves upon their Persecutors, as not knowing the time appointed them by the Divine Providence. But their time being in God's hand, they expected the Finishing and Course thereof. Wandering about in the mean seasons; or hiding themselves in Caves of the Earth, till the Determined time of their Death came, or till God, who is the Determiner of their times, would manifest it to them, either preventing, and disappointing
their

* Ib. p.
711.

their Persecutors, or Delivering them into their hands, seemed most fit and seasonable to him.

This Caution, and Flight in Persecution, as he adds, was not to be called Cowardise; but was an Exercise of their Fortitude, and Patience. For in their Flight, they did not nourish and indulge Fears of Death, but fortified their minds against it. They shew'd Fortitude and Tolerance, and Gave a Proof of Passive Valour, which is best seen, not in being suddenly Cut off, but in tedious Sorrows, which so highly enobled Job's Patience. Their Care was, as he pleads, neither to Fear the time of Death, when it was present; nor to anticipate that time which God's Providence had Decreed for it, or resist the Divine Dispensation, whereto they knew assuredly they were Reserved: that so, they might not be culpable, as being, by their own rash Actings, the Cause of their own Fall.

But was it without Fruit, either to themselves, or the Church of God. Their Flight, saith * he, was not idle, in as much as they Preached the Truth when they fled, and never forgot to seek the Profit of others, under all the Hardships which they sustain'd themselves. When flying they hid themselves, they were, by God's Dispensation, only reserved this way, as Physicians, for the wants and use of those that stood in need of them.

In Sum, the Rule of Christian Prudence for us all, as * he observes, when we are sought for in Persecutions, is not to be rash and Precipitate in tempting God, but to fly, and hide our selves; and wait till the appointed time of our Death comes; or, till our Great Judge shall allow that for us, which seems best to himself. But when he allows

as this Liberty, he would have us to stand always ready and prepared in our minds, when either our appointed time calls us, or we are taken up and apprehended by our Persecutors, to stand and strive for Religion and the Church, even unto Death. And thus the Martyrs did in Persecutions. Whilst they lay hid in Dens and Secret Places, they confirm'd and fortified their own minds: and when Discovered and Apprehended, they bravely Suffer'd at the Stake. But if some of them voluntarily surrendered themselves to their Persecutors, they were not carried on to this, as he adds, by inconsiderate Zeal or Rashness: but professed every where, and before all, that this promptitude and Free Oblation of themselves, proceeded from the Holy Ghost.

Thus is there Place, by the Permissions of Religion, for the Servants of Christ, to save themselves by Flight in Persecutions.

And this, for Pastors as well as People, when the Persecutions of the Pastors is Personal. For then, to save themselves, they may Depart from the Churches they Conducted, or from the Followers they had gathered: as St. Peter did*, upon Herod's Design against him, from Jerusalem; and St. † Paul, when laid wait for there, from Damascus; and Jesus himself, from Jerusalem, or Fury, or other Places, as Designs were laid for his Life by the Jews. Yea, tho' by this Flight of theirs, some innocent men, as Petrus Alexandrinus* observes, be accidentally brought in Trouble, and suffer for their Sakes. As † Gaius and Aristarchus were, as he Notes, for St. Paul; the* Guard of Soldiers for St. Peter; the † innocent Infants for our Saviour Christ; and Zacharias,

* A. 12.

17.

† A. 9.

24, 25.

* Can. 13.

† A. 19.

29, 30, 31.

* A. 12.

19.

† Mat. 2.

16.

charias the Father, for John the Baptist, when his Mother Elizabeth fled with him from Herod: all of them unblamed, notwithstanding, on the account of their Flight, such things followed.

But when the Persecution is common, of the Flocks as well as of the Shepherds; and whilst the Flock it self stays, and is like to be left Destitute and Unprovided, or much Scandalized and Dispirited by their Departure: there it seems as if the Pastors had not the same Allowance. For when Dangers are Common, to the People as well as to the Priests; the Leaders themselves should by no means be among the foremost in Fears, and backwardest in Tryals. They that in times of Peace have been the Preachers of Faith and Fortitude, of Resolution and Constancy; when trouble comes, should be the first Patterns and Examples thereof among their Flocks, and take especial care, lest by the hastiness of their Flight, and excess of Fear, they Disgrace their former Sermons, and fall under that smart Censure, which * Tertul. **De Coron. Mil. c. 1.* has past on several Pastors in his days, viz. that in *Past Leones, in Prælio Cervos, i. e. out of Dangers, they were as bold as Lions, but in danger, as timorous as Harts, and, like them, all for trusting to their heels.* The Pastors stand charged, not only with the Care of their own Bodies and worldly Interests, which the permission of Flight secures; but with the Charge of the Church, being most Solemnly intrusted with the care thereof, and watching for their Souls, as they that must give account, as St. * Paul says. And therefore at such ** Heb. 13.* times, it behoves them to consider, not only 17.

how their Flight would serve their own Temporal or Private Wants: but also how it would Comport with their Publick Trust and Office, and suit with their Charges Spiritual Necessities. Whether it be like to leave them quite Destitute, without necessary Helps or Instructions, or Hope and Expectation of Spiritual Ministrations. Whether it is like to trouble the Spirits, and weaken and faint the hearts of their People; and turn those out of the way, whom the Presence, Direction, and Exhortation of a Spiritual Guide would have kept firm and constant therein; encouraging them to yield to a Persecutor's Threatnings, when they see they are so formidable, as to shake the very Pillars of the Church, and make the Leaders shift for themselves.

And accordingly our Saviour, though, when the Pastors are specially Persecuted, he gives liberty of Flying; yet, in a common Persecution, *when the Wolf, i. e. a Wolfish Persecutor Comes to snatch and scatter the Sheep*, as well as the Shepherds; he tells us, *to flee for himself*, and leave the Flock without any Guard or Provision, is the mark, not of a Good Shepherd, but of an Hireling. The Good Shepherd, saith he, *when the Wolf cometh*, is not so careful for himself, as for his Charge, and *Giveth or * staketh down his Life for the Sheep*, i. e. is ready to expose and hazard it for their sake, Joh. 10 11, 12. The Good Shepherd he distinguishes, not only from Thieves and Robbers, who seize those Flocks which are not their own: as all those False Messiahs were, who came to impose themselves upon the Fold before him, v. 8. But also from all Mercenaries, who, though

* *ἑαυτοῦ*
τίθησιν.

though * *entring in by the Door*, i. e. by himself, * v. 2. 9^o
 or under him the true Lord and Pastor; yet look
 to his Sheep only with an *Hirelings* indifference,
 and not with a true Pastoral Spirit and Affection.
 Instead of watching them, with his *Life in his*
band, as the true Shepherd doth: *He that is an*
Hireling, whose own the Sheep are not, i. e. who
 looks to them, not with an Owners care and
 heartiness, but only for his pay; when he seeth
 the Wolf coming, he leaveth the Sheep, and fleeth
 to save himself. The Hireling fleeth, because he
 is an Hireling, and careth not for the Sheep, but
 for his own safety, v. 12, 13. The Note of the
 Hireling, is the want of Care for the Sheep in
 time of Danger, or of Pastoral Affection. As St.
 Paul also intimates, when he laments the want of
 the Pastoral Spirit, and sets it off, by having
 none by him like-minded to Timothy that good
 Shepherd, who would naturally care for their Spi-
 ritual State, and by finding all to seek their own,
 not the things which are Jesus Christs, Phil. 2. 20, 21.
 And this disposition, as our Lord notes, the
 Pastors shew, when in times of Danger, they
 leave their Flocks destitute and unprovided,
 scandalised or dispirited; and, instead of stand-
 ing at the peril of their Lives by their Charge,
 flee away and shift for themselves.

Indeed, if when some go, who are more par-
 ticularly obnoxious to a Persecutors Fury, others
 are still left to supply the needs of the Saints;
 these Servants of God have more Plea to with-
 draw themselves: As St. Polycarp did at the im-
 portunity of the Brethren, as the * Church of * Ap. Euseb
 Smyrna write, when he was sought for by Name. Hist. Eccl.
 And l. 4. c. 15.

And as *Athanasius* did, when Persecuted by *Syrrians*. Who yet, in that Barbarous Outrage, which drove him away, was * Resolved to be one of the last in the Church, and see how the Flock escaped the hands of the rude and merciless Souldiers, before he would attempt to escape himself. Or, if they are like at one time, to be taken off more privately, or before strangers, they may think fit by Flight to escape that storm, that, with the more Advantage to God and the Church, they may offer themselves before their own People; there, by their own Practice, more effectually confirming those *Exhortations to Martyrdom*, which they had formerly made among them. And thus *St. Cyprian*, in the * last Epistle he wrote to them, tells his Church, that when Officers were coming so fierce him to suffer at *Utica*, he had withdrawn, and waited in his *Recess*, till he should hear the *Proconsul* was returned to *Carthage*: intending then to return to his own House, that he might suffer before their eyes. This Liberty I grant is indulged us, not only for God's sake, and the Churches, as *St. Cyprian* used it in this last instance; but also for our own. We are allowed to fly, not only in way of well husbanding the Opportunities for serving God, and our Brethren; at *St. Clement* of *Alexandria* leaves a mind, that neither seeks nor fears Death, to Determine this Point by the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Mankind: but also in mercy to humane weakness. But this Permission to humane weakness, is in subordination to the Glory of God, and the Good of the Church. So that when the Pastors cannot withdraw themselves,

* Vid.
Apol. pro
Fuga.

* Ep. 81.

* Strom.
4. & 7.

selves, without dishonouring God and Religion, scandalising their Flocks, or leaving them destitute: they are not to fly, but to abide by the Dangers, though at the Peril of their Lives.

But this Caution of Spiritual Prudence, lying in preventing Worldly Harm and Consequences; Worldly Wisdom is forward to extend too far, and turn into a *Doing Harm to our Duty, to keep off Harm from our selves.* To keep out Harm and ill Consequences, as far as we can, so long as we keep not out any Duty, or part of Duty, together with them; is what God allows, and what Prudence guided by the Spirit is to take care of. Accordingly, it doth not run into a Duty of outward Harm, as I say, before it has a Call: and when, by a Faithful Discharge of Duty, Suffering is drawn on; by Flight, or Concealment, it may save it self from it if it can. But Worldly Prudence is for Providing against the Harm, though it be by making no Provision at all for the Duty; being always ready, rather to omit the Doing what is Good, than to Suffer what is Evil.

To prevent this, we must take along with us these Rules, in all our Deliberations about these matters.

1. That Caution is never Good, which Drops, or Isolates a Duty. The Caution of a Christian is only to beware against Harm, whilst he doth his Duty; never to beware of doing his Duty, lest he suffer Harm thereby. Religion owns no hurt like the hurt of Sin; and so prescribes no Caution against any thing, so much as against Evil-

Doing. The Breach of Duty is never to be taken up as an Expedient; but the Performance of it must always be our first and chief End. Do that when we are called, and do nothing against it; and then be as Cautious of any hurt that is like to come thereby, as we can. But this must never be neglected, or let fall, that a Worldly Good or Convenience may be secured. Tho' this is so much the way of Worldly Prudence, viz. to be wise and wary against Worldly Harm, by the Omission of any Duty which is like to Draw it upon us, that, when men have a Call to Discharge a Duty, 'tis really thought by many somewhat a suspicious thing, to hear them ask after the Prudence of it; that being, God knows, much oftner the method of those, who are seeking and have a mind Prudently to Omit, than of those who have a mind Prudently to Practise it.

2. We must never shew more Care and Caution, to prevent ill Consequences to our Worldly Interests, than to prevent ill Consequences to our Spiritual Interests. The Interest and Honour of Religion and Virtue, of Truth and Righteousness, is to be above any Worldly Interest, in a Christian's Thoughts. And therefore in looking about to descry Consequences, his Eye should soonest fix upon, and his Care and Wariness Provide for those Consequences in any way, which are like thereby to befall these. It will consider, and see in the first place, when a Course is proposed, whether Virtue and Religion are like to get or lose by it; whether it will bring any Truth of God, or Duty of Godliness, under good or ill Report: whether it will lay Hin-
drances

drances and Incumbrances in its way, or afford Encouragements; whether it will stagger, or confirm others in the Belief; seduce them from, or invite them to the Practice of Truth and Holiness. The Consequences to Duty and Religion are far beyond any Consequences of this Life: and all truly Religious men, as they ought, so they will set much more by them. And 'tis a plain Evidence any Persons are men of this World, and Worldly wise, when they are more Watchful and Sollicitous against Temporal, than Spiritual Consequences; and can take up with any Damages brought to Truth and Godliness, when they are necessary to keep off Worldly Damage from themselves. What will be the Effect and Consequence thereof, to the outward Ease and Enjoyments, Liberties or Privileges, Security or Advancement, of our selves or Families, Church or State, says the Carnal Man. But what will be the Consequence of it, to Duty and Religion; not to make them Secularly Great, but to shew them Spiritually Good; not to hold them in External Power and Possessions, but to give or keep their hold upon Mens Hearts and Consciences, by Confirming all in the Belief of the Reality and Sincerity of the Efficacy and Excellency thereof: This is the Religious or Spiritually Wise Man's Question.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

Of Spiritual Prudence in Worldly Matters, or as over-ruling all other inferiour Prudence, about things of this Life. And of Sollicitude.

THE Third, and last Thing Proposed at first, to set off the Nature and Offices of Spiritual Prudence, is to shew its part in worldly Matters; or how, after its having been thus wise as is declared, for the things of Religion it self; as for all other Inferiour and Worldly Prudence in Things of this Life; it so Orders the Ends, and Over-rules the ways thereof, as to keep them subservient to Religion, or as best becomes Christians.

Worldly Prudence, is to be Wise for the Ends of this World. As, to preserve our Lives here, and the Comforts and Enjoyments thereof, our Properties, Power, External Quiet. To secure, or augment these, or other earthly Good things, to our selves, our Friends and Families, to the Church or State. All these are Worldly Ends. And to be wise for them, is Worldly Prudence. And this we have all need of here, because we are Members of this World, needing Worldly Things, and being twisted in worldly Relations, Good Men and Good Christians, as well as others. But though we live in this World, we aim at a better World. We are kept alive by Worldly Things, but we live for better, even for

for Heavenly Things, which Religion shews, and which the ways thereof will procure for us. So that the Wisdom of Religion must limit and over-rule us in all the Acts of Wisdom and Prudence we shew, about the lesser and inferiour Things of this Life. The Flesh must be subject to the Spirit, and the Wisdom of this World, to the Wisdom of the next.

Now, Concerning this over-ruling influence of Spiritual Wisdom, in all inferiour and Worldly Deliberation, I shall note these two things.

1. *First, That the Rules of Religion are the truest Wisdom, as for the next, so even for the Ends of this World.* They are really the most Prudent ways, and best chosen, for all the Great and Desirable Purposes of this Life. So that had God left them free, and said nothing of them; their own Usefulness would have recommended them to every discreet man, and true Worldly Wisdom would have said the same, that Duty and Religion now says of them. No other fancied ways, and least of all their Contraries, could so well have served the true Ends of living here as these do. Other ways perhaps may seem more serviceable, and fit to be taken up for these Ends, at some one particular turn. But none of them are so fit and conducive, if taken into constant course, and made a General Rule of Living. And men are made to live by Rules, and their Happiness to be sought by Rules: without which, there would be nothing but utmost Uncertainty and Confusion, which would
spoil

ſpoil all happineſs, and prove the greateſt miſery here on Earth. They are made to deſire, and to ſeek what is beſt for the Ends of Life, not only in ſome one, or few Actions, but in the Tenor of Life ; not only what will happen to promote them on ſome accidental turns ; but what is fit to do ſo ordinarily, and at all times, though by chance, on ſome particular turns, it may admit of an Exception. And this General and conſtant Service, muſt be by Rules, which are general things ; and made to direct, not only as occaſion ſerves, but (that all other men may know where to have us, and we know where to be our ſelves, without which, as I ſay, there would be nothing but jealousie and confuſion inſtead of happineſs,) for Directors in ordinary and conſtant courſe, or at all times.

Now, as for Rules of Wiſdom, for attaining the true Ends of Life, there are none better, than thoſe preſcribed by our holy Religion. God having adopted our Real Interdeſt into our Duty, and made thoſe things, whereby Wiſdom would Direct all men to ſerve themſelves here, the way of ſerving him, and ſecuring to themſelves the joys of Heaven hereafter.

What Rules, for inſtance, are better in *Converſation*, than to give no offence, neither injuring, nor deſpiſing, and leſs diſdaining any. Than by being Gentle, and eaſie of Access, and Courteous ; a way of gaining much, that will coſt us little. Than by having a care of Cenſure, not being apt to tax what we do not know, or to Condemn others. And of all Backbiting, or Accuſations, and Ripping up, either the real or
fancied

fancied Faults of absent Persons; yea, in Places and Companies, abounding in Censure, by being wary, even how we bring up the Names of the absent, who are not there to speak for themselves, lest it afford Matter to the malignity of Evil Tongues, and make them evil spoken of. Than by not expecting much from others, not being soon angry or exceptionous; which will prevent our having Difference with others, and, under any Carriage of theirs, keep us easy within our selves: and however Affronting or Provoking their Carriage be, we do not thereby lose much, if it doth not rob us of the Tranquility and Enjoyment of our own Spirits. By all these ways, and sundry others which Religion prescribes, we take the wisest care to Converse with others, with the most advantage, and the least hurt and trouble to our selves.

What Rules again, are better *in Dealing*, than to be true and just, which are the way to be trusted. To be Industrious and Careful in our business, to do always as we are willing to be done by, to be Reasonable in our Demands, Moderate in our Gettings, Fair in all our Trading and Transactions; which will most effectually retain those that try, and draw in others to Deal with us, when they are neither like to be Neglected or Deceived, and Over-reach'd in their Business. To Do all that is Right, and with a willing mind, that discovers no uneasiness in being shew'd it, or backwardness in Performing thereof. To offer nothing that is wrong, yea, when others offer it, not to return it; not maliciously remembring, and studiously recom-
pening,

penſing, but Forgiving Injuries, which is abſolutely, as the moſt Chriſtian, ſo the wiſeſt Courſe, and moſt for the Ends and Enjoyment of this Life. For it coſts us abundance more Labour and Vexatious Thought to Revenge an Injury, than it need do to put it up. To Forgive it, is only to bear the Diſquietude that is paſt; but to Revenge it, is to throw away a great deal more of our Quiet after it, and to add to our former Sore, by a New, and, in probability, much Greater Heap of freſh Toil and Danger.

What Rules are ſo Wiſe, for the Enjoyment of our ſelves, of Health of Body, and Eaſe of Mind in this Life, as Sobriety and Temperance, and Chaſt and Due Regulation of Fleſhly Pleaſures, and Moderation in all things. As bringing our Minds in every thing to our Conditions, not affecting ſtill to have what ſuits our Fleſhly Likings, but to like what God is pleaſed to ſend us. As Mortification, and due Subjection of Bodily Appetites, inſtead of pampering of them; as fitting looſe to this World, inſtead of being Worldly minded, and fond thereof. As Living upon Providence, and truſting to God more than to our ſelves, or to any humane Proviſions; and being reſigned to his Will, or Contented and Deſirous, rather that he ſhould Do his own Will, (as we profeſs in our Daily Prayers,) than that he ſhould Do ours. Than all which, what can better prepare us to receive all the Viciffitudes of this Life; to give us leaſt Trouble from the ill, or afford us moſt Comfort, Contentment,

Contentment, Unwearying and true Enjoyment from the Good Things thereof.

What Rules, lastly, could Conduce so much to *Settle Happiness*, as in *Neighbourhoods*, so in *Families*, *greater Societies*, and *all Relations*; as the due Discharge of all those Duties which Religion Prescribes in those Relations. By *Parents* being careful to Educate their Children well, and to Provide for them, keeping them under an wholesom Government, but kind, and without unnecessary Provocation: and by *Childrens* being full of Respect in all things, and obedient to them again. By *Wives* being subject, in all things innocent, to their Husbands: and *Husbands* being Kind and Condescensive to their Wives, as to their own Flesh. By *Masters* Governing with Equity, and forbearing Threatning: and *Servants* not answering again, but shewing heartiness in what Service they perform, and Doing it with Diligence, and all Fidelity. By *Princes* being Wise, and watchful for the Publick Good, and Ruling all in the fear of God, with Clemency and Justice: And *Subjects*, on the other hand, ever honouring their Rulers, as the Ministers and Vicegerents of God, obeying their Commands, where Conscionably they may; and keeping in their Subjection, not throwing it off, and forcibly resisting, where they cannot obey.

Such as these are the Rules of Religion, both towards our selves, and towards others. And better cannot be given for attaining the wise Ends of Life, and for ordering our selves, as the best studied Prudence would have us, in Conversation or Business, by our selves, or with others,

others, and in all Relations. So that every Religious Good Man, whilst he keeps to the ways of Duty and Religion, follows the wisest Courses, and the best Rules of Prudence for this Life. Yea, though he should not be among those that pass for the Wise, but the Weak and Simple Understandings; though he should not see their Conduciveness for these Ends, nor follow them for the Worldly Wisdom, but only for the Religion of them. Though he has not the skill and apprehension to see and judge of Secular Prudence: yet, whilst he keeps to the Rule of his Duty, he has always this, which is the best Proof of Prudence, ever to be found in the most Prudent, and Secular wise ways. Having the Grace of being Good and Honest, he cannot miss of Doing what the best Understandings must needs say is most Prudent and Discreet. The Wisdom of God guides him, where, if left to himself, he could not, like better Understandings, shew much Wisdom of his own. And following what God has prescribed, he is sure to act wisely, though he is not able to say much to others, to shew them the Wisdom and Conduciveness of his own Actings. The Ways of Duty, wherein he walks, are chosen of God, and are the Ways of Gods Prudence, for serving the wise Ends of Life. And the most Prudent Persons had better follow him, than their own Understandings; they can never find such another Director, nor make any other choice of ways, so Wise and Prudent for themselves.

But besides these ways of Duty, for compassing the Ends of Life, which are ways of God's chusing;

cluding: Worldly Wisdom has a great many more of its own, which God has left Free, and whereof he has said nothing. The worldly Ends of Life themselves, are rather our Liberty than Duty, more God's Permission than Injunction. And in pursuing them, besides the Duties of Religion, whereby we set them on whilst we are serving him: there are multitudes of other ways, wherein Worldly Wisdom has its latitude, and that a very wide compass. And in this Field of Worldly Prudence, when it proposes its Ends, and Pursues them by its own Methods, this is

2. Secondly, The other thing I would note of Spiritual Prudence, That *when worldly Wisdom sets up Ends, or thinks to serve it self by ways Prejudicial to Godliness, it over-rules it in all such motions.*

Sometimes Worldly Prudence, is for *setting up ill things for Ends.* It proposes how to serve Vices, or Vanities; how to compass Ends of Ambition, or Covetousness, Lust, or Revenge, Vain-Glory, or Intemperance. It aims at the accomplishing, or serving of a Sin; which is no End of Life of God's Making, nor any part of his Creation; but begot between Satan and our selves, and meerly of his and our Production. And Spiritual Wisdom, quite throws out such ends; which being the Stain and Reproach, the Misery and Destruction of Life, must never be turned into the aim thereof. As it doth also, all setting up the Real Advantages, and useful things of this world, *for last and main Ends.* Not seeking at all to serve God, or

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show forth any Virtue thereby, which is to turn them into an opportunity and matter of Religion; but only to satisfy our Fleshly Appetites, and enjoy our Selves therein.

Again, in seeking the Good things of this Life, *Worldly Prudence is apt to transgress in Means and Methods.* And the Prudence of Religion is, as to prevent its setting up Undue Ends; so to keep out any thing Ill, or Undue, in the way or course it takes: over-ruling it in these, not as agrees most with *Worldly Minds*, but as best becomes *Christians*. Particularly I shall observe,

1. *First, In Pursuing any Worldly Ends, it keeps it from serving it self, by Doing any Forbidden and Unlawful Things.* And besides all that has been hitherto Discoursed to this Purpose, with a more especial Eye to Ends of Duty and Religion; I shall here set this off briefly, in some most obvious Instances, in the course of Secular Affairs.

In Competition, the Way of Worldly Wisdom, is for Doing any thing that will overcome. It will use any Means, and take all as lawful, that seems fit to strengthen themselves, or weaken their Adversaries. It will blacken a Competitor by Calumnies, whisper and suggest Fears about him, tell any Stories it has heard before they are Examined, if not such as it self has Maliciously invented, misrepresent what might be innocent and well meant, pervert their Words or Deeds, though harmless in themselves, to very hurtful and evil purposes, as *David* complains his Adversaries did by him, saying, *every Day they wrest my words, Ps. 56. 5.* Yea, sometimes in the midst of these Undermining Arts, speak fair to his Face,

Face, and cover Treachery under Compliment and kind Expressions, as the same Holy David complains his Enemy did, *while his mouth was smoother than Butter, having War in his heart: and his Words, when softer than Oyl, yet being Drawn Swords, Ps. 55. 21.* In Sum, their End in Competition, is Victory; and to do any thing that will overcome, is the Rule in Worldly Practice, though in Reason and Religion it should be otherwise.

But now Spiritual Wisdom, in pursuing any Worldly Ends against Opponents, will keep us from using any ways, either False, or Mischievous. Indeed, as Prudence, it will watch Times, and pick Advantages for it self: *A wise mans heart, as Solomon says, Discerning both time and judgment, Eccl. 8. 5.* But as Christian, it will Do nothing injurious to them for Advantage. It may take what lies as Free for it, as for others, and at the most Advantageous times. But it will shew nothing uncandid, utter nothing false, offer nothing injurious, or what it is not willing to receive it self. Nay, when we receive such usage from an Adversary, it will not allow us to return it on him, not being for returning Evil for Evil, but for overcoming Evil with Good, Ro. 12. 17, 21. As it is for having every man approve himself the truest Friend; so also the fairest, and justest Antagonist and Competitor, in the world.

Again, in gaining Interest, and the Favour of Men, worldly Wisdom is for doing any thing that will please, and procure help from those it has to Deal with. Without Interest, Designs and Busi-

ness, will not easily go on. And this needed Interest, often lies among ill men, with whom no Interest is to be made unless you please them. And, peradventure, they are not to be pleased, but by ingaging with them in wicked Factions, against Religion, or some much Decryed and Exploded Duties, or Truths thereof; or, against the known Laws, Priviledges, or, Constitutions, either of Church or State; or by going along in immoral Practices, without making any Difference, more than they do, of Good or Bad. They are men Given up to base Ends, or that seek and set on better, by base and wicked Methods. And if we expect they should serve our Ends, we must first serve theirs, and Drink, or Swear, or Commit other Lewdness, in compliance with their wicked Humours, or ungodly and vicious Ends or Interests. And these Fleshly Wisdom is for taking up when they lye in its way, rather than go without their Favour and Assistance.

But now true Christian Prudence, will never allow us, either to *Dishonour God, or injure our Brethren, or abuse our selves, to please Men.* It is for seeking the Favour of the Potent, and the esteem of all, by courteous obliging Carriage, and by worthy Actions: but never by base Arts and Compliances. It is not for losing God, by Doing any thing that is ill, to please and gain them. It calls upon us to Do our Duty, and nothing contrary thereto, whether thereby we keep, or lose Humane Helps and Succours; whether all men cry us up therefore, or Decry us. When we seek to have *our way* *Established*, or take Effect,

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Ponder the Path of thy Feet, says this Wisdom, i. e. the Means we use or Course we take, and turn not to the Right hand, or to the left, Prov. 4. 26, 27.

Again, in raising Families or Fortunes, Growing Rich or Great; *Fleshly Prudence, is not to apt to keep within the bounds, of Right and Justice. When Getting is the End, it will over-reach the Ignorant, that want skill to deal with it; and oppress the Poor and Fatherless, that are too weak to withstand it. In Bargaining or Commerce, it will prey upon other mens Necessities, vent False or Faulty Wares, set exacting Prices, start feigned Claims, use any Fallhood or Unfaithfulness, Strictness and Rigour, Wrong and Violence, to enrich it self. Making haste to be Rich, it is not like to be Innocent: for they that will be Rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many Foolish and Hurtful Lusts, as St. Paul says, 1 Tim. 6. 9.*

But now Spiritual Wisdom, is not for being hired to an ill, or Dishonest Action, by any gain. Unlawful Gains, it reckons among the Greatest Losses, as giving away a Good Conscience, and a Blessed Eternity, for some empty and Perishing Riches. *What is any man the better, though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul, saith our Saviour? Mat. 16. 26.* What is ill and unjustly got, it esteems not as a Blessing, but a Curse to Families. The Gettings, will not so truly enrich; as the Injustice, in time, will load and impoverish, calling still for a just Retribution, and vindictive stroke of Providence. And therefore such, are not to pass for durable

Riches, being not so like to raise and build up, as to consume an Estate, and, like a secret Canker, to eat it out.

Such as these, are wont to be the Methods of Worldly Wisdom, in compassing Estates, carrying on of Business, Prevailing in Competitions, and the like: And in all the Hypocritical and Insincere, the Ungodly and Unrighteous Methods, whereof it uses to serve it self when occasion requires, which I have already spoke of in the Preceding Chapters. And such as these are the Restraints, which Spiritual Wisdom lays on all Good Christians therein. It permits not, to look for Expediency in any Sin, or to serve themselves in any Necessity, or on any Occasion, by Evil-Doing. *The Thoughts of the Righteous are Right*, says the Wise Man, i. e. his Righteous Ends, are alwaies pursued and managed by Right ways: *but the Counsels of the wicked are Deceit*, i. e. he seeks to compass his Ends, by Wicked and Deceitful Doings, *Prov. 12. 5.*

And this Restraint it lays upon us, to keep only in Good ways, not only as Christian, but as Prudence too. For in Reality, this keeping upright, or only to Good ways, in pursuing all the main Ends or Good Things of this Life; is the way to speed most, and to find the best Success in that Pursuit. And the giving our selves a Liberty, of betaking to ill ones, as occasion serves, is much more like to miss of it. In an uncertain World, that is all Vicissitudes and Contingencies, there is no way of Pursuing these Ends, that is certain, and never fails of Success; but all may miss sometimes. But this upright

up, ker, of ry- on, in- ds, re- re- e- all to n- py re as t, d

upright walking, will miss much less, neither so frequently, nor so widely, as perverting of our ways, when our need requires. So Honesty is the best Policy; and this never stepping aside to an unlawful Expedient, is absolutely the wisest, and the likeliest course, which, in Pursuing these Ends, a Prudent man can take.

For doth not all Driving Trades, and management of Business, and carrying on of Projects and Designs, lye in Dealing with others? And is not all Dealing, where men dare Trust, and can Confide? And doth not all Trust and Confidence depend on Uprightness? No man is willing to be Deceived, or Cozen'd, Wrong'd or Outwitted. And therefore if they suspect any to be a Crafty Person, Men are loath to Deal with him. Or, in Dealing, being still suspicious of Design, they are slow and difficult to Grant him any Reasonable thing, whereof they would make no Scruple to another Person. If they find a man to be a man of Tricks; having had to do with him once, they will be wary, how they come to have to do with him a second time. Dishonesty, and Unlawful Ways, may serve a mans turn in some one Act. But it will Disserve him in an hundred for that one, in those that are to follow, and is mere Folly if we look forward: incapacitating him for being trusted, and rendring him, it may be, the more unfit to carry on any Bargain or Business, all his Life afterwards. For a man that lives by Trade or Business, is not only for Doing this one Day, but many Days. Not for Living by one Customer, or Dealer, and for

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having all his End on him at once : but for so using him once, as that he may hope to have him often ; for so Dealing by that one, as may Encourage and Draw in many more to Deal with him. And this Wisdom or Providence, that looks forward, a man quite Contradicts, that uses any Dishonesty, or Unlawful Means, to serve a Turn at present. Tricks, for a while, may lye hid ; and so long, they stand a worldly mind in some stead, to the Ends of this World : but this uses not to be long, and sooner or later, they are for the most part discovered. *A Lying tongue is but for a moment, Prov. 12. 19. He that walks uprightly, walks surely, says Solomon : But he that perverteth his ways, or hath recourse to Dishonest and Unlawful Methods, shall be known, i. e. a little time will discover him, Prov. 10. 9.* And when once discover'd, his way is hated, and he is not trusted. And then, by catching unlawfully at a little gain, or success, in one act ; he loses all, that he lawfully might have had, in all the Scores of Opportunities, which, keeping in honest ways would have brought him, of getting, or succeeding, in the like matters afterwards.

Besides, by the just Providence of God, this way of serving our worldly Ends by Unlawful Methods, is wont to be Defeated. The ill Means, used to Divert an Evil, he over-rules to bring and pull it down upon them ; as the killing of Christ, to bringing in the Romans, the compliances of the Gnosticks, to involve them in Destruction with the Jews ; the Sale of Joseph, to bring his Proud and Wicked Brethren to pay him Homage : though

though all these, as I formerly noted, were intended, and wickedly resorted to by the Actors, for quite contrary Purposes. When, to compass an End, Men flye to an Evil and Forbidden Thing; that sets God and Providence against them. And they are like to have but little cause to boast of their Gettings or Success, whilst he sets himself to blast all they Project, and to undo what they are unrighteously a Doing.

2. *Secondly, In Course of Converse or Business,* Spiritual Prudence keeps the Wisdom of this World, from letting fall, or being wanting in any Duties. It Drops none, as I said above, to save it self from Persecutions: much less should it omit them, to suit it self to Turns and Companies. This Men are very apt to Do, in the usual Method of this World. They are called in Worldly Companies, and in the Course of Worldly Business, to express their Regard for many Duties. It may be the Name of God is blasphemed, or some Truth of his run down, or some Virtue Dishonoured, and we stand by and hear it. Or, some Innocent and Good Men, Good Ways, or Good Things, are loaded with Reproach and Accusations, which we know to be False. Or, intemperance is carried on, with an expectation of our Presence, or Concurrence therein; or the like. Now here the Suggestion of Worldly Wisdom, is out of Bashfulness to keep silence, and not to shew uneasiness at the Reproach of God, or Goodness, or Good Men, for fear of Displeasing, and giving offence: And to Countenance intemperance, or, it may be, in part at least, to share therein, rather than break Company,

Company, or incur the Censure of being Rude, Morose, Unsociable, or the like. But Spiritual Wisdom, sets the Honour of God, and the owning of Virtue, and the assertion of Truth, of the Goodness of Things, or of the Innocence of Persons, at an higher Rate than these Worldly Considerations. And therefore it will not be wanting, to manifest and shew forth the Honour it has for God, the Justice it bears to Men, the Conscionable Regard it has for every Virtue, and the Conscientious Fear it has of every Sin, when it is call'd to manifest its Like, or Dislike, its Concurrence, or Dissent, on any just Occasion. Not being *for suffering Sin upon,* much less Countenancing it in *our Brother,* Lev. 19. 17. and requiring us, *to have no Fellowship with the Works of Darkness,* but rather to reprove them where we meet them, as St. Paul says, Eph. 5. 11. So to bear out *Christ's Truths and Laws,* and to bear up his Name, not only in Secret, but in Life and Conversation.

The better to Discharge and Facilitate this, I think it would be an Excellent Rule of Spiritual Prudence, *for all true Christians, to make open and ordinary Professions of strict Virtue.* Not falsely giving out, what Virtue we have not. Nor, affectedly bringing into Company what we have, when we need not. But, on the other hand, not being ashamed or afraid to Profess what we really are, and all that strictness, which it becomes Christians to have, or they ought to Practise, when there is occasion for us to shew our selves. It would be very fit, I think, *for all Christians,* to appear to have, and to keep about them the same

same sense of Things in Conversation; which they appear to have at Church. Professing still, to like and approve here, what they pretend to like and approve there. And shewing their Godly Fear, and Dislike of the same things, when they meet them Proposed, or Practised before Men; as they did, when they heard them Discoursed of, and Represented before God. And for *all Ministers*, to appear visibly to think, and to say the same of all Matters in Company, as they do in their Pulpits: Shewing the same Sentiments of Things, in Liking, or Disliking, allowing or rebuking them; and giving them the same reception, when they meet them in Practice, as they did whilst far off, and whilst warning against them in Discourses.

And the benefit of this to all would be, that few or none would expect any Unchristian Compliance or Entertainment from them; or, where there is any thing of Breeding and Civility, offer any thing Unchristian in their Company. In respect of some of the more Modish and Fashionable Vices of the World, which are the way of Reception in a Place, and expect more Compliance; as shewing Hospitality, for instance, by Furnishing out a Table for Intemperance: These strict Professions of the contrary Virtue, may perhaps seem harder, and would incur more Censure at the first. But that makes but a few Days talk. And when once a man's virtuous Profession and Resolution is known and got abroad, and some few have had Tryal of it: that talk is at an end. And then his Virtue, in Talking and Acting so at common times,
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what they themselves are ready to Do in their best Thoughts, and most serious Discourses, will be Honour'd: and his Non-Compliance with their breach in their Practice, of what they Profess in their wisest Seasons, will be no longer Censured by them. And when once men have this Opinion of his Virtue, he will be out of the way of Temptation; and they will never come to him, when they seek, or expect to be otherwise received, than agrees with his known Practice and Profession.

3. *Thirdly*, In Pursuing any Worldly Ends, Spiritual Prudence will keep a man from being Sollicitous about Events, in the way he takes.

Sollicitude is an anxious and mistrustful Fear, and Care, of speeding in these Worldly Pursuits, or of attaining what we seek for. When we are in pursuit of any of these Ends, there is a Care and Studiousness of compassing it. And this carefulness is the Greater, where men are under a fear of failing therein. Which fear is wont to be most, where the things are over-valued; an over-estimate making one jealous without Cause, and apt to fear for a thing, where no ground of fear is: or, where they want Faith, and mistrust the Providence of God. All which are too usual in the way of Worldly wise men. Who, making Worldly things, not so much a Means in their passage, as a main End, so placing too much in them; and not attending to Providence, or the Promises of God, which are invisible Things, for the preservation thereof, but only to what is before their eyes: are apt to be full of very superfluous Fears, and anxious and distrustful

distrustful Cares, about these Temporalities, which they so immoderately and unduly prize.

But now Spiritual Wisdom takes care to prevent this. Not that it is against all Provision before hand, or all Care for futurity in Worldly Matters. Go to the Ant thou Sluggard, says Wisdom it self, about Providence, and Seasonable Cares and Preparations for Futurity, Consider her ways, and be wise, Prov. 6. 6, 7, 8. And the Apostles at Jerusalem, and other Christians, under the appearance of Eminent and approaching Want, and great Distress, were providently careful to provide for it the best they could, by Selling what Houses and Lands they had, and putting the Prices into a Common Stock, Act. 4. 34, 35. Yea, in the Family and Retinue of Christ himself, there was a Provident Care, and Judas bore a common Purse or Bag, which was for having something still before-hand, Joh. 13. 29. and c. 12. 6.

About these Things † Labour and Care is to be † Labor est Exercised, and only Sollicitude to be removed, as exercendus St. Jerom notes, i. e. such Care as Disquiets the Sollicitudo Mind. tollenda.

But the Provident Fear and Care, or well-order'd Sollicitude about these Temporal Things or Ends of this Life, which Godly Wisdom allows, is to be a Care and Providence under these following Limitations.

1. First, It is not to be for these Temporal Things in Life, as for the Ends of Life it self. We are not made for this World, nor enjoy it as Inhabitants, that set up their rest therein, as in their proper place. But we are made and design'd for a better, and only pass through this

Jerom.
Tom. 9.
Comment.
ad c. 6.
Mat. on
nollite
Sollicite
esse. v. 25.

† 1 Pet. 2.
11.
Heb. 11. 13

as *Strangers and Pilgrims, in search of a City above in the Highest Heavens*, as the † Scripture says. And therefore these *Worldly Things* we must not stop in, as if, like as they are made for us, so we were made for them. Our Care for them, is not to be as for the *Ends of Life*, which we must only seek to please our selves in, or enjoy: But as for *Adminiculis Vita*, for the *Means and Helps thereof*, which we must use, in order to better and higher Enjoyments. They are to be cared for, only as things necessary, or useful to us in our passage. Or, as subservient to us in seeking better Things; or, in Exercising those Virtues, and setting forth those Religious Duties, which are the true and real Ends of Life.

2. It is not to be a Care and Studiousness for *Superfluities*, but for the *true and Reasonable Necessities, and Conveniences of Life*. *Superfluities* are not necessary to real Wants and Conveniencies; but only to the Phantastick Wants and Conveniencies of Vicious, Vain, or Diseased Minds and Imaginations. And Spiritual Prudence is not for Pampering and Gratifying; but for Curing an Unsound and Distemper'd Fancy and Apprehension. It Neglects not to provide for real Conveniencies, but it seeks not to supply the wants of Vices, or Distempers of Men's Souls, or makes no Provision for the *Flesh*, as St. Paul says, to fulfil the Lusts thereof, Rom. 13. 14. Where God has provided Men with Plenty and Surplusage, either by his Blessing on their own Endeavours, or by the Care of Ancestors, they are eased of the Great Temptation to Sollicitousness, and are the more inexcusable if they offend

offend therein, for more and more Superfluities. But where he has allotted less, and Prospect of want may put men upon more impatient an uneasy Cares; there Spiritual Prudence is for having its Care and Sollicitude spent on Conveniencies, not Superfluities; and on real Conveniencies, not Imaginary and Phantastick ones, which are infinite, and never to be satisfied. *Feed me with Food convenient for me, Demens mei*, that is, commensurate to my Circumstance and Condition in the World, was wise Agur's Wish, Prov. 30. 8. And give us † *this Day*, or * *Day* † Mat. 6. 11. by *Day*, our *Daily Bread*, says the *Lord's Prayer*. * Luke 11. 3. Bounding our Sollicitude and Cares with what is really sufficient, and enough for us; or with *Bread*, i. e. Convenient Sustenance and Support, which excludes *Greediness*. And claiming Holy Acquiescence and Content, if it be but for *this Day*, or *from Day to Day*, in Daily Dependence upon Providence, which excludes *Diffidence*. And so to be maintained for all the Days of our Lives; at the end whereof, we can carry away nothing, but Good Works and a Good Conscience, not any Worldly Things.

3. 'Tis not a Study and Care for these Necessaries and Conveniences, that is *Superfluous*, i. e. *more than needs*; or a *shewing more Sollicitude*, when they would be as well secured, and served, by less. We have Employment enough for our Care on higher Things, which call for all the Care that we can spare; and so have little cause to lavish it out, and throw it away unnecessarily, on lesser Matters. Some Care for them is necessary, God having so Order'd Things to

to incite industry, that we cannot compass what we need without our own Care. But when we do take care for them, that should be a just and proportion'd Care: not an unnecessary Care, where the Superfluity doth the End we seek no Good, but only troubles our selves, and leaves us the less care, in store and reserve for better Things.

It must not be immoderate, or more than Suits; either,

1. With the true Weight and Worth, the Dangers or Hazards of these Things. The Worldly Things we seek, are of a very mixed and limited Goodness. And we may easily bestow more care and pains in pursuit of any of them, than it will answer. They are likewise many times more easily attainable, and not liable to any Great hazard. Or, when there is more uncertainty in any pursuit; yet, if we cannot have one thing, the World has variety, and we may have another as Good, that will serve as well. Or, if we have it not at one time, let us but wait, and we may have it at another: And, perhaps, when that time comes, it will appear to be a better. So that we may easily spend more care upon them, than they will require. And having so much use of it: Spiritual Prudence is for having us to be Good Husbands of our Care: not spending more upon any Worldly Thing, than the worth of the Thing will bear, and, if it were got thereby, we should be well paid for; nor laying out more thereon, than the Difficulty of the Thing it self, or the hazards incident to it, do require.

2. Or,

2. Or, *more than suits with our other Greater and Higher Cares.* We must be careful in such sort for any Ends of this Life, as that we Neglect not all due Care for the Things of the Life beyond this. So that our Care for any Worldly Thing, must not be such, as takes up our mind too much. Not such, for instance, as leaves it not Time and Care enough to spare for Spiritual improvements, and for attaining all the Virtues of Religion, and for watching against all the Temptations of the World, and for any opportunities and ways of Doing the Good we have been taught, or of Avoiding the Evil, whereof we have been fore-warn'd: all which is such a *Care of this Life, as choaks the Word,* as our Saviour says, *Mat. 13. 22.* Nor such, as *intrudes it self at an aliene, or unseasonable time:* calling us to mind our Worldly Care, when we have a contrary Call, to mind God or Religion, some work of Piety, or Charity, or, when we are present at, and our minds should be attending to, and spending all their Care upon some Spiritual Functions, as Prayers, or other Divine Offices; or, in any other Call and Season, for like Good and Religious Things. The Care of this World, must yield to the Care of Religion: it must not juggle out God and our Duty, but give way to them. So that it is always immoderate and ill Govern'd, when it is not made to comport with them.

3. Or, *with the enjoyment of our own Minds.* When Care grows Great, it is very Disquieting, and a vexatious burthensom thing. And most of those Worldly Things which men pursue, tho'
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they

they are valuable when they come cheaper, and are got more quietly: yet, however they may flatter themselves with Fancies before, when they come to try them, they do not ordinarily find that Satisfaction therein, which will Compensate for the loss of Ease and Tranquility of Mind. That Care is immoderate, and gives away more than it is like to get, which Robs us of our Internal Ease, and self Enjoyment. For it is a much more valuable thing to enjoy what is within, than what is without us, and to enjoy our selves and our own minds, than those Worldly things we are in pursuit of. That Care is to be removed, which is *Pexation* and *Disquieting* to the mind; What our Lord has forbid, not being all Labour and Care, but only Solitude, as St. Jerom says.

4. Particularly it excludes all such Care, as Disquiets it by *Distracting Fears*, and anxiety about Events, or all anxious Cares with mistrust of Providence.

For, a Competency of Worldly Things, tho' we have no Surplusage; and always such success in any pursuit, as is good and fit for us; is what we have secured by * Promises, and the Providence of God. And all our Solitude for these Things, must only be a Care, with Faith in God, and Reliance on Providence; never an anxious Fear, with want of Faith, or Distrust thereof. Which Distrust of God, and about Things men are eagerly Desirous of; must needs fill Worldly Minds, indeed, with Anxiety and Distractions. For their Great Desires will put them upon Great Cares, and their want of Faith, leaving

* Rom. 8.
28.

Heb. 13.5.
Mat. 6.33.

Having no sure Anchor of Hope in God, the
fix'd stay to hold to, will fill them with
Fears. So that they are still wavering in Ebbs
and Flows, Hopes and Fears, and are of Anxious
and Distracted Spirits.

But now this Anxious and Mistrustful Solicitude,
is what Spiritual Wisdom by no means allows. We
are not to give way to it, though we have Bread
but from *Day to Day*, which calls us to a con-
stant Dependance on God for what we shall eat
next, as I observed before from the *Lord's Prayer*.
Nor in Dangers, either Private or Publick, to
Church or State; though our Preservation or
Deliverance is but from *Day to Day*, without
any comfortable Prospect of Continuance, and
we are held there in like constant Dependance.
Our Care indeed is necessary, for attaining of
Worldly Good Things, and putting by Worldly
Evils; God having left those good attainments
for an Employment of Industry, and not Con-
ferring them upon us by himself alone, or making
them fall on every Man's head by Miracles, but by
our own Concurrence. And these, Depending
in good part upon us, must be a Matter of our
Care, employing our Care, as well as his Pro-
vidence. But as they Depend on us, they De-
pend on him too. And as we are to have them
by our Cares, so must we have them under, and
from his Providence. And therefore, when we
are careful to get them, we must at the same time
look up to him, and trust he will give them, or
such other Good in lieu thereof, as he sees most
fitting for us. *Faith in Providence*, especially
where also we have God's express Promises with-

all, must always both support our Cares, and Succeed or give Success to them. So that whenever we Care, and are Sollicitous for any Earthly Things, it must always be under God, not excluding him: and with Faith in Providence and Gods Promises, not with anxious and distracting Fears, and mistrust thereof. Which anxious and mistrustful Solitude about Food or Raiment, that is, the Good Things of this World, our Saviour warns against, *Mat. 6.*

For the Care there spoken of, is a mistrustful, painful Care; that Solitude being taxed, as shewing little Faith, *v. 30.* or being of Doubtful mind, and hanging in Careful suspense, as *St. Luke* explains it, *Luke 12. 29. ne inquietare, be not anxiously and mistrustfully Sollicitous,* says our Lord, or take no thought for your Life, or the things of this World to support Life, what ye shall Eat, or Drink, or for the Body, what ye shall put on, *Mat. 6. 25, 31.* Which Sollicitous mistrust he seeks to remove and exclude, by the Assurance of God's Care over us. Reproving it, from the Greater instances of his Care, which all of us have received already: *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body more than Raiment?* and is he like to withhold this, who gave that? *v. 25.* And from what Care all other Creatures Do receive: *Are not the Fowls of the Air, that have none of our Provisions, neither Sow, nor Reap, nor gather into Barns, yet taken care for by him all the year, and Fed? and are not the very Lillies, that neither Toyl, nor Spin, Clad? And are not ye much better than they? or can he overlook you, whilst he takes Care of them? v. 26, 28.* From the

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Care Providence has, even of the minutest
 matters belonging to us, *the Hairs of our Head,*
he says elsewhere, being all numbered. From ^{+ Mat. 10.}
 God's Knowledge of all our Needs, and a Pro- 30.
 mise and Assurance, that as he knows, so he will
 take care of all their Wants, that take care of
 their own Duty, and of his Righteousness. *Your*
Heavenly Father knows ye have need of all these
things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and
his Righteousness, and all these things shall be ad-
ded unto you, v. 32, 33. And, to name no
 more, Lastly, from the Unprofitableness of such
 anxious and mistrustful Cares, which, in most
 Cases, serve not at all to set on our own wishes,
 but only to Torment and Disquiet our selves.
Which of you, by such taking Thought, can add
an Cubit unto his Stature? v. 27.

5. Lastly, 'Tis not a Solitude or Carefulness
 before the time, or a Preoccupation of Cares,
 forestalling and anticipating them before the
 time comes. Spiritual Prudence, in caring for
 Worldly Matters, is not for tormenting it self
 with Fears of what may never happen; or with
 troublesome Cares of Things that are far off.
 It is not Solicitous about Reaping, whilst 'tis
 only Seed time; or, what Opportunity and Sea-
 son they shall have to Sow again, when they are
 now but in the time of Reaping; or how the
 Markets will go, and what the Sale thereof will
 be at the time of Selling, when the Grane is yet
 in the Field, and not got into the Barn. This is
 to trouble our selves with Cares, before the time
 of Caring; to be *Soliciti in Crastinum*, or take
 thought for to morrow, which is our Saviour's Ex-
 pression

pression in this Prohibition. Not letting the thing alone, that is to come to morrow, to be cared for to morrow: when it will be no better cared for now, than it will be then; and when this Days Care, is only to add the Care of one Day more, not to prevent any that must come after; an Early Trouble, and before we need, for what we cannot shun; and a painful anticipation of a Distant Care, which, at its own time, must be cared for, and repeated over again. Which our Lord respects, when he says, *Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the Things of it self: Sufficient to the Day, is the Evil thereof*, Mat. 6. 34. *Sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof*, i. e. Sufficient to this Day, is the affliction of the Care and Solitude that is present, and which it brings along with it: and we shall have enough to Do, in bearing the Care and Solitude of any future and remote burthen, when its own time is come, and it is made present.

Such is the Carefulness and Solitude for Worldly Things, which *Christ* forbids, and Christian Prudence is for banishing out of the hearts of Christians, when they are in the way of Compassing any Worldly Ends. A due Care it allows, that is not Disquieting or Vexatious, Mistrustful of God, or Neglectful of better Things. But it permits not such Care of them, as sets them up for Ends, not only for Means and Instruments; as is laid out for Superfluities, not for real Wants and Conveniencies; such as is a superfluous Care, more than needs for our purpose; an immoderate and ill-govern'd Care,
more

more than the Things will answer, as well as more than the attaining of them would require; such as Defrauds better Things, and Consults not with our greater or higher Cares; as burthens and disquiets our Minds, as Distrusts God, and Providence, and turns into Anxiety and Distracting Thoughts; or, lastly, such as preoccupates distant Evils, and torments it self before hand with Futurities, which it cannot help, yea, perhaps, with Tryals or Maladies it shall never feel, and is not content to defer a troublesom Cate for a Thing, 'till the time of caring for it come. All these ways of being Solicitous, besides the resort to unlawful Means, so much insisted on above, are the Solitude of Worldly Minds, who fix in Worldly Things, and weigh them in a Worldly Estimate, and seek them only by Worldly Succors. Not of the Spiritually Wise, who seek them only as serviceable to higher and better Ends, or in subordination to God, and subservency to Religion; over-ruling all the Suggestions of Fleishly Wisdom in these Points, so as may best serve it self, and as may make us do what most becomes Christians.

And this is the last Office of *Christian Prudence*, which I propos'd to treat of, viz. to Govern in Worldly Affairs; or, in all the ways forementioned, so to furnish out *Inferior and Worldly Prudence* about Things of this Life, in some Points, and to over-rule it in others, keeping it from serving it self by any forbidden ways, by letting fall, or being wanting to any Duties, and from being *Anxious and Sollicitous* about the Attainment of what it pursues; as may best suit with the Spirit and Pre-

cepts of Christianity, and become the Servants and Followers of Christ Jesus.

And thus at length, it may, at least in part, appear, what true Christian Prudence is; how it lies in seeing and following Right Ends of Religion, and pursuing them only by fit and Christian ways; in taking for the Execution thereof, the most Advantageous Seasons, in tempering them to Circumstances, and shewing Caution to prevent harm thereby, or ill Consequences; and, as for all other inferior Prudence in Things of this Life, in so ordering the Ends, and overruling the Ways thereof, as may keep them most subservient to Religion, and as may best become Christians. And how contrary the way of Worldly Wisdom, or Fleshly Craftiness, is to all this, in all the foresaid Particulars.

C H A P. XIV.

A Recommendation of Christian Prudence.

AND now, in Conclusion, for a further Explanation of, as well as for a Motive to that Christian Prudence, which I have endeavoured to recommend, and set off in the *Preceding Chapters*; I shall briefly observe, how we are taught all this, both to keep to one way, and to shun the other, in *St. Paul's Practice*. For this is the Account which that blessed Apostle gives of himself. *Our Rejoying is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity, and*
Godly

Godly Sincerity, not with *Fleshly Wisdom*, but by the *Grace of God*, we have had our *Conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. i. 12.

He Disclaims having had any *Conversation by Fleshly Wisdom*; i. e. by having suited his *Conversation to Fleshly Ends*, or *Governing himself by Fleshly Methods*. *Wisdom* is seen in proposing of *Ends*, and in choice of *Means*. And *Fleshly Wisdom* is such as is fittest for *Fleshly Purposes*; pursuing *Fleshly Ends* by *Fleshly Courses*, especially by *Deceit* and *Craftiness*. † By *Fleshly Wisdom*, he here means, not *Eloquence*, but *Wickedness*, and *Craftiness*, says *Theodoris*. And to pursue all Things, to Deal and *Converse with all Persons of this World by Fleshly Wisdom*, is to serve the *Ends*, or *Appetites of our Flesh* by them: to take up at every turn with such things as are easiest to *Flesh and Blood*, or make most for it; and to compass them, as need is, by any Method, especially by *Craft* and *Deceit*. So that then men *Converse by Fleshly Wisdom*, when they *Govern their Conversations by Fleshly Considerations*, and *Worldly Maxims*, and *Compass their Ends by Unlawful and Deceitful ways*, and *steer their Course in every thing they do*, or meet withall in this *World*, as may give them most and best enjoyment of *Worldly Things*. And this, all they count wise, who are fixt to this *World*, and look no further. But this, the *Blessed Apostle* tell us, was not his measure: not by *Fleshly Wisdom*.

† Carnalem sapientiam hic dicit, non Eloquentiam, sed malitiam & calliditatem. Theod. in loc.

But by the *Grace of God*. That is, by *Religion*, or the *Rules of the Gospel*: which is called the *Grace of God*; as Containing his Gracious Deal-

ings

ings and Intentions towards us, and as both Declaring to us what we should Do, and Offering us Grace whereby to Do it. *The Grace of God bringing Salvation, teaches us, &c.* saith St. Paul, 1. c. the Gospel doth, Tit. 2. 11. So that his Conversation he ordered all along, not as might get him, or keep him most ease and interest in this World: but as might best secure his innocence in every thing, and the Rules of Religion. His chief Care was, at all times, and in every Action, to Do his Duty, to keep the Orders, and serve the Honour of Christianity. All his Study and Deliberation, was as a Man of another World, not of this; as one that sought to save his Soul, not to pamper his Body; what way he might be most innocent and holy, not what would make him a more wealthy, worldly easie, or happy Person. If a way, or thing, was never so cross to his Worldly Interests, and to the Cravings of the Flesh; to Discharge his Duty, and keep a Good Conscience, he would take, or Do it. And in any thing, if a Duty was called for by the Gospel, or the Grace of God, for any Considerations of this World, he would not forego it. *Not in Fleishly Wisdom, but in Simplicity, and Godly Sincerity* (which I have before explained at large,) *and by the Grace of God, or Rules of the Gospel, I have had my Conversation in the World.*

Lastly, I shall Note the Comfort and Satisfaction he found in all this. *This is our Rejoycing, &c.* *our Glory and Triumph, the Testimony of our Conscience, &c.* Such a Cause of Rejoycing, *his Converſing in all Things without Fleishly Wisdom,*
and

and by the Grace of God, proved to him most fully, afterwards. But whilst he was Practising this Rule, though he had plenty of inward Comforts and Satisfaction, yet he found outward Trouble enough therein. As he had no regard for this World, or for the Rules of Fleishly Wisdom: So had this World no more Favour or Regard for him. All this time, whilst he held on in the way of Simplicity, and of the Grace of God; he run through as much Rage, and Rudeness, and Persecutions of the World; as any man. This, indeed, was one thing he was still sure of, and the great Exercise of his Life in every Place. So the Holy Ghost, as he says, witnessed to him, that in every City, Bonds and Afflictions abode or waited for him, Act. 20. 23. Nay, these he met with, in the highest Degrees, Conflicting, not only with the Malice, but with the Down-right Rage and Madness of the People. They were ready to tread him Down, like Dirt under their Feet; and valued him no more than the sweepings of the Streets: *We are*, saith he, *as the Fish of the World, and as the off-scouring of all things, unto this Day*, 1 Cor. 4. 13. Here, had he need enough to betake himself from Simplicity, and the strict Rules of the Gospel or Grace of God, to *Fleishly Wisdom*, could any thing on Earth have driven him thereto. And he met with outward Trouble, and Sorrow enough, for his Conscientious and Religious Stiffness, that he would not.

And yet after all this, he doth not in the least Repent of all his Sufferings; nay, were they all to be suffer'd over again, or as many more set before

before him, he is as ready as ever he was, to hold on still in the same Course. He looks upon those Sufferings in this way, with other eyes, than common Spectators do; rating them as Favours, and the truest matter of Glorifying and Joy. His Case, all this while, seemed most miserable to others; but they saw only the outside, and viewed it at a distance; whereas, in truth, it was all the time happy to himself. The Pains of his Sufferings were soon gone; but the Peace and Joy thereof were lasting. Whilst the Pains and Troubles were most pressing upon him, he had still a stream of Inward Joys and Consolations coming in, that did refresh and support him under them: *God comforting him, as he says, in all his Tribulations, and still as the Sufferings of Christ abounded in him; so his Consolations also, in Proportion abounding by Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 4, 5.* But though these Joys came with his Sorrows, yet they did not vanish with them, but staid and stuck by him afterwards, for a full and abundant Compensation.

And this is the Comfort of all truly Religious and upright Sufferers; as this Holy Apostle was, they are both pleased with themselves, when others are most displeased with them. Though they have not the Joys of this World, yet they have Joy in it: Joy, whilst they lose the good things thereof, yea, therefore joy because they lose them, and still a greater measure of joys, the greater their loss is; if it be for Discharging a Good Conscience towards God, or for keeping the Rules of Righteousness, and the Service of *Jesus*. And they have a clear Prospect of most ineffable

ineffable and lasting Joys, so soon as ever the Scene shall change, and they shall be taken and removed from hence. *Come thou Good and Faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,* Mat. 25. 21.

But we live in a time, when, to the greatest Numbers, *Popery*, that is indeed a very Corrupt Religion, seems more formidable than any other thing. And to call a way *Popish*, sounds worse in the ears of the Populace, than to say it is *Unchristian*. And therefore, to conclude this Subject, I shall note in the last place, how all the foresaid Methods of the Worldly Wise, which I have taxed before, are no better than *Popish Corruptions*.

There are *Popish Morals*, as well as *Popish Superstitions and Idolatries*. The Depravations of Good Practice, and of Moral Honesty and Justice, by a Number of their Casuists, have been as scandalous, and will prove as fatal to those Souls who are deluded by them, as their Depravations in Matters of Faith and Devotion. And the forecited Rules of the Worldly Wise, are among those very ways, whereby too many Papists have Corrupted Christian Morals. Nay, they are the Morals of *Jesuits*, who are the worst of Papists, and whose scandalous accommodations of *Christ's* Rules and Precepts, to comply with *Fleshly Passions and Interests*, suiting Religion to Self-Ends, and basely bending Moral Duties to serve Corrupt Turns and Worldly Necessities, are Condemned in these, and such other Points, by the sober Papists themselves.

And

And this I do rather note, because I see so many Reverend and Worthy Persons, who seem the strictest and truest Examples of Moral Integrity among us, and stand out against all these Unlawful Compliances and Insincerities of the Fleishly Wise, appearing as the Patterns and Confessors for Honesty and Morality, in a Day of General Temptation and Defection, are yet, among other Marks of common hatred and scorn, branded with the Name of Papists, (notwithstanding all the opposition they made to Popery, and some of them most Eminently, when the Day of Tryal was,) for these their brave and truly Christian oppositions of Popish Morals. Yea, and that by those, who, content with a Zeal against Popish Errors in Faith, and Superstitious Devotions, in the midst of all their heat against them, are running into the worst parts of their Morality, sucking in the rankest Poyson of Jesuitish Honesty unawares.

For, as to the Points before mentioned, such as these are the Jesuits Principles; all Taught by some or other, (for God forbid I should Charge all therewith,) in that Order.

They are for *Doing Evil that Good may come*. This is the meaning of that Grand Salvo, so much magnified, and made use of among them, viz. *The Right Direction of the Intention*, which affords them such wonderful help in an unlawful Thing. Thus they clear men of the worst Crimes; as *Simony, False Witness, Thefts, Duels, and Murder* it self. Plead but Necessity, and say there is need of it, for Religion, or the Church, or their Society, for the Publick, or a Man's own
Private

private Good, to preserve his Life, Estate or Reputation: and then the Breach of the Precept they make to be without Guilt, if therein a Man doth but Direct his Intention aright; permitting the Evil of the Action, if the Actor doth but take care to purifie his Intention.

They are Notorious, for Giving a Discharge of Relative Duties, particularly towards Princes, when those Duties grow Burthensome or Unsafe, under Impious, or Oppressive Rulers. For, of all others, they are the men that are foremost, (leading others,) and fullest in Asserting, the Deposition and Dethroning of Kings; the Absolution and Discharge of Subjects, from the Obligation of their Natural Allegiance; and the Lawfulness of Rising in Arms, against Heretical, or Tyrannical Princes. There is scarce any one thing, wherewith for so many years last past, not only this Order of Men, but the Church of Rome, have been more earnestly Charged, and more Shamefully Silenc'd. Yea, 'tis the Test of Popery by our Laws; the Legal Conviction of Papists, being by the Tender of the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, which were made to Secure and Defend our Princes, against the Poison of these Tenets.

They are infamous, for all Arts of Insincerity, and Fallaciousness. Having been the Pest of Humane Society, by their Doctrines of Equivocation, or using of Doubtful Words and Ambiguous Speeches, which the Parties concern'd shall take otherwise than they mean them. And of Mental Reservation, Reserving in their own Minds, some hidden and unexpressed Clauses, in their

their Declarations; or secret and unexpected Conditions, in their Promises: So to make their Speech, a Truth to themselves, though it be a Lye to others. Of getting, and compassing their Ends, by Deceitful Suggestions; or setting out so much Truth as to serve the turn, and craftily hiding what would hinder it. And, instead of that Plainness and Simplicity, which is prescribed by Religion, studiously assuming all counterfeit Shapes, and inventing and propagating all those Fallacious ways, or Liberties of Dissembling, which the Fashion of Lyes can suggest to their hearts, whereby to overthrow the Faith of Men.

Whilst they Reserve their Minds, or inward Service for God; they are for Giving the External Service, or outward Appearance, to any Wickedness expected from them. Thus, as the Author of the Provincial Letters † observes, they allow'd the Chinese, to worship a *Chingis*, if they were careful to hide under their Cloaths an Image of Jesus Christ, to which, by a Mental Reserve, they were to pay those Publick Adorations, which, in visible Appearance, the Idol Receiv'd.

They are for Tempering their Duty, to Circumstances of outward Convenience, Doing so much, as they safely may, without Worldly Loss or Disadvantage. Contenting themselves, as † they did in the Indies, to Preach up a *Glorified Jesus*, to those that would not hear of a *Crucified Jesus*. And abating the Duties of Religion, till they have brought them Down to the Pitch and Proportion, the Wants and Worldly Necessities of those that consult them. They

They are for *Changing Doctrines*, as they *Change Turns and Interests*. Not only in *Different Turns*, of their own, or their *Societies Affairs*, but of their *Disciples*. Having one *Resolution* for one man, and at one time, and a *contrary* at another. By this *looseness*, taking in all comers, and *sitting and reconciling* all *Times and Persons* to their own *Ends*.

They are for *Holding, and Maintaining*, what is once *ill got*. And make *Unjust Possession*, a *Just Title* to it. And order *Easie Amends* and *Restitutions*, for *Wrongful and Evil Deeds*; no more than can *consist* with the *Offenders own Credit and Convenience*.

They have *invented Salvos*, whereby men may keep *innocent*, and yet *Act in an Unlawful Business*; and *Minister*, and help other Men to *Sin*, without *Sin*ning themselves.

They *vacate*, at their *Pleasure*, and put by the *Laws of Morality*, as they *lye* in their way; rendering them *insignificant*, and of *little or no Force or Obligation*. Either by *Interpretation of Terms*, or so *expounding* the *Terms* used in *Prohibiting* any *Sins*, as shall *exempt* all, or almost all their own *Transgressions* from coming under them. Or, by *allowing* the *Thing*, not under the *Name* whereby it stands *forbidden*, but the *very something* in another *Form*: like to what they *Resolved* in the *Case of Usury*, permitting it, not under the *Name of Usury*, but of the *Contract Mohatra*, i.e. *Selling* any *Person*, that wants *Money*, any *Commodities on Trust*, at a *Great Rate*; and he *presently Selling* them again for *ready Money* to the *same Person*, at so much less as the *use* would

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come to. Or, by nice and vain *Distinctions*, eluding all the Force of a Duty, by limiting it to some such Bounds, or making it to bind only for such Reasons, as they will be in little need to transgress. Or running it into such thin, and subtle Notions, till they have lost both it and themselves. Or, by the Plea of *Favourable Circumstances*, which in Carnal Estimate call for Ease and Indulgence; and which they are most Liberal in Granting at God's Cost, to save themselves. Or, by *Shifting of Intentions*, confining the Malignity thereof, to *Doing it for certain Ends*, which they can easily Evade, by proposing other Ends therein to themselves. The main Study, and Boasted Subtilty of their Casuistry, lies not in Explaining, but in Defeating Moral Duties, in Spreading Plasters for all Sores, and inventing Salves for Sins. And, instead of Instructions and Inforcements, how to keep; venting among their Disciples, Palliations and Devices, to shew them how, without Sin, they may break God's Commandments.

In Sum, not to lengthen out this Point by any more Particulars, they are extreemly tender of *Fleshly Wants and Necessities*. But this, as they that are for more *Flesh*, than *Spirit*; shewing no tenderness for God, but making as bold as may be, with Religion and its Duties. Theirs is an *accommodating and complying Theology*; and their Great Care is not to bear, but to avoid and shift off the Cross, and temper and bring Down the Strictnesses and Severities of *Christ*, to the Pitch and Measure of a *Fleshly Mind*. And this wicked Policy, or Suiting the Rules of Morality and

and Holiness, to Carnal Ends and Inclinations, they call *Religious Wisdom*, or being wise to retain or multiply the Followers, to serve the Ends and Interest of the Lord Jesus.

It would be too long, to annex particular Sayings and Proofs, of all these, and other such like Opinions, and Maxims of Fleishly Wisdom, advanced by some or other of these Carnal Politicians. They who list may see enough from their own Authors; or, without giving themselves trouble to look further for them, in the *Mystery of Jesuitism* or *Provincial Letters*; and in the several *Extracts of Propositions from the Jesuits Writings in the Additionals*.

Thus are the foresaid Rules and Worldly Maxims, Declared against in the Preceding Chapters, no better than *Jesuits Principles*; which Secular Reason, and Carnal Interests, and Self-Ends, are ready enough to Suggest to Fleishly Natures of all Sects and Parties; but which they, above all others, have cultivated to Perfection. So that, as these Rules of Fleishly Wisdom take Place, and come in use, the *Jesuit* creeps in; and revives amongst us. And if *Jesuits Morals* must come in to Drive out *Popish Superstitions and Idolatries*, as much, and as bad Popery, will come in at the Back Door, as goes out at the Fore-Door, and there will be no Deliverance from Popery that way to boast of.

I have an hearty Aversion to Popery; whilst I pity their Persons, and am, I thank God, ready to perform all that is Just, and Charitable to them; at the same time mightily condemning

† Vid. Letter 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. &c.

their Persuasion, as a most corrupt Religion. Accordingly, I think it a mighty Preservation, to be kept by God's Grace and Good Providence, from those most Dangerous and Mischievous Errors; or, from all violent Temptations to them. But I confess, I am for keeping out Popery, or any other ill Religion, only by Orthodox Tenets, and true Christian Practices. Which God be thanked, whatever it is of too many of its Members, is the way of this Church, in all her Authentick Doctrines and Offices; that set as much by Good Life, as by Orthodox Belief, and are not more for Professing Truth, than for Practising a strict and inviolable Morality and Holiness: As all her Children, and Sons, must be too, who will not Revolt, or break off from her Principles. And I think it a most lamentable Unhappiness, for Men in their Zeal against so blame-worthy a Religion, to run headlong into some of its most heinous Vices; and even when they are opposing it, with the greatest seeming Fierceness, from sound and intire Protestants, to become in Truth Part-boy'd Romanists, or Drive out Popish Superstitions, by the use and help of Jesuitish Immoralities. Which really is Done, as I have shewn, as often as the fore-condemn'd Rules of Fleshly Wisdom, and others like unto them, do find Place amongst us.

FINIS.



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